March 2025
DHS15
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goodFOOD

EST 1989 MIDDLE EAST

Iftar at home

- Aubergine fattah
- Bejewelled saffron chicken pilau
- Naan gosht (lamb curry)

Festive treats

Inventive dishes for every occasion

Power up with pulses

Sweet Escape

Jamaican ginger cake • Kunafah • Mississippi mud pie pancake cake

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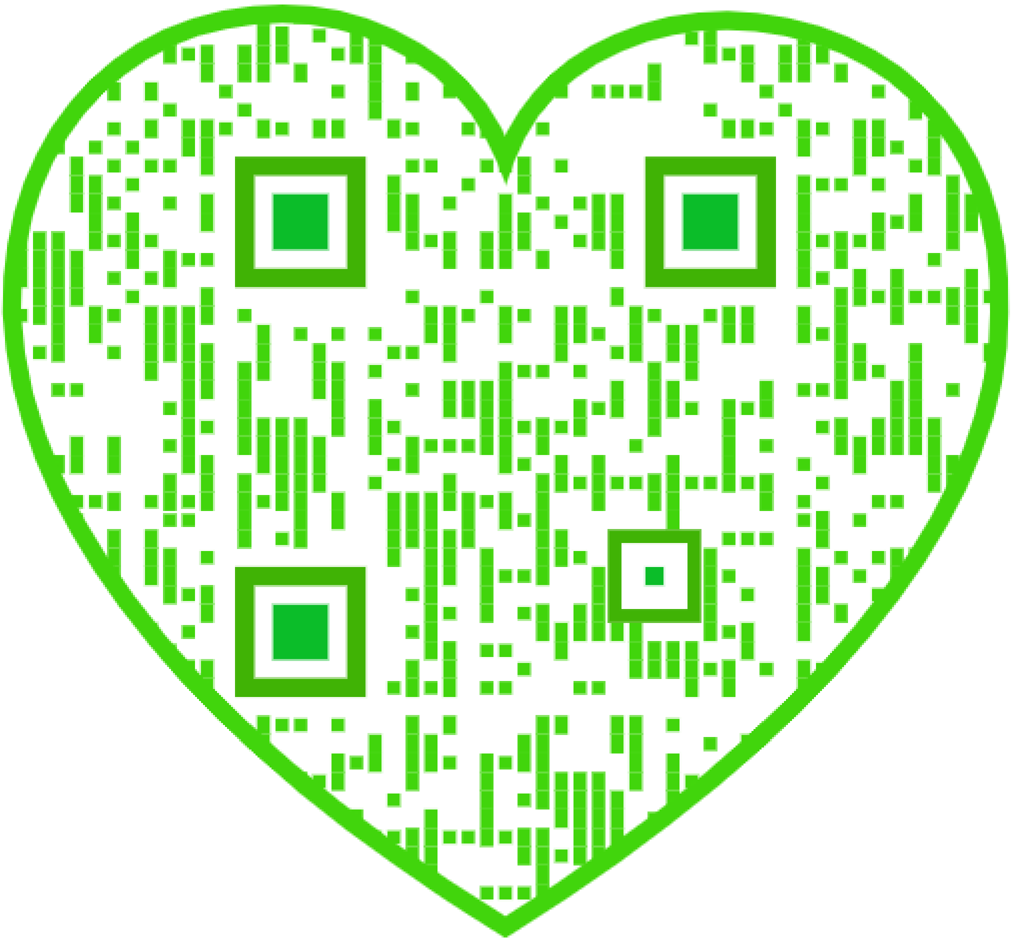

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SAADIYAT ISLAND • ABU DHABI

AN EXCEPTIONAL IFTAR

Experience a sumptuous Iftar featuring Arabian and global flavors, live entertainment, and indulgent desserts amidst picturesque surroundings.

AED 275 per person

Sunset – 11:00 PM
Daily live oud entertainment

Oléa, The St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort, Abu Dhabi

LEARN MORE

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Welcome!

March is a season of renewal, celebration, and great food. During Ramadan, kitchens come alive with slow-cooked dishes, nourishing pre-dawn specials, and Iftar treats. Spring's arrival also brings fresh flavours and exciting new ways to cook and share meals.

If you're looking to shake up your weekend traditions, our *Surprising Sunday Lunches* (p49) reimagine the weekend centrepiece with unexpected yet utterly satisfying twists. *Bistro Hits* (p53) pays homage to French bistro classics—think comté-filled gougères and mussels. Meanwhile, *At Its Best* (p61) spotlights the season's finest vegetables, offering inventive ways to celebrate their peak freshness. Our *Next Level* Beef hotpot elevates the winter warmer with deep, complex flavours (p68).

With Holi, Shrove Tuesday, and Eid ahead, our celebratory recipes (p73) will keep your table festive. Additionally, you can learn more about Ramadan and savour wholesome dishes such as our cover star, Aubergine fattah (p80). Because good food is also about feeling good, our expert guide to pulses (p90) and eating for immunity (p96) is packed with sustainable ways to support your health through mindful eating.

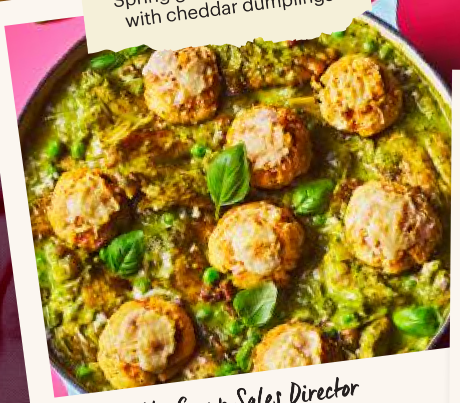
Finally, if you haven't yet joined our Food Club, now's the time! Sign up online for exclusive access to our gatherings—turn to page 100 for our most recent burger showdown.

Ramadan Kareem!

Nicola Monteath
Editor

Signature Selections from the team

Spring green chicken stew with cheddar dumplings



Liz Smyth, Group Sales Director

Jamaican oxtail

Gill Fairclough, Sales Director

Roasted rhubarb & rose eton mess

Blanche D'mello, Assistant Editor

Kunafah

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goodFOOD
EST 1989 MIDDLE EAST

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Our recipe descriptions

V Suitable for vegetarians.

❄ You can freeze it.

⊘ Not suitable for freezing.

Easy Simple recipes even beginners can make.

A little effort These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry.

More of a challenge Recipes aimed at experienced cooks.

Low fat 12g or less per portion.

Low cal 500 calories or less per main.

Superhealthy Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.

Good for you Low in saturated fat, low in salt.

Heart healthy Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids.

1 of 5-a-day The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving.

Vit C **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**
Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients.

GLUTEN FREE Indicates a recipe is free from gluten.

Some recipes contain pork. They are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for this symbol:

P Contains pork.

Your Say

We love hearing from you!

star letter

This month's issue of *Good Food Middle East* felt like the perfect balance of indulgence and comfort. I especially loved the focus on rich, heartwarming flavoursome dishes like Creamy Garlic Chicken & Polenta and Roast Pheasant with Wild Mushroom Ragout which stood out as must-tries. The dessert section was just as inspiring, especially the Sticky Carrot & Date Cake with Tahini Maple Icing, which sounds like an incredible fusion of flavours. I also enjoyed the feature on the *Good Food Middle East Awards* winners as it's always great to discover top dining spots in the region. And the new *Eat Well for Gut Health* series is a fantastic addition, offering useful insights into a mindful approach to eating without sacrificing enjoyment. Overall, this issue felt like a warm invitation to slow down, cook with love, and truly savour each meal. It was a joy to read!

Mohamed Jamaldin Jendi

I came across the Nihari recipe for Eid feast and I was stunned by how simple the recipe was and was put together flawlessly! I absolutely enjoy Pakistani food and I have so many go-to places in Dubai for Nihari but never did I think it would be so simple and quick. I tried the recipe last weekend with lamb, made the nihari masala with all the ingredients and it was delicious and I am sure I will be making it every month moving forward. Thank you for the lovely recipes that you keep posting, looking forward for more during Ramadan!

Jenny Pius

This month's issue of *Good Food Middle East* was a delight, especially the Wonky Veg Challenge feature. I loved how it showcased creative ways to use imperfect vegetables, turning them into delicious meals like Leek & Kale Hash with Sage Fried Eggs. The focus on reducing food waste while making budget-friendly, flavourful dishes was inspiring. The Comfort Food Special also stood out, offering hearty recipes perfect for cozy meals. Plus, the Saudi Arabian culinary exploration was a fascinating read, highlighting the country's evolving food scene. Overall, it was a great mix of sustainability, comfort, and cultural insights!

Arman Sunesh

WIN!

WIN A LUXURY DINING EXPERIENCE AT LA CANTINE BEACH, WORTH AED3,000

Indulge in the ultimate beachside retreat with a luxury experience at La Cantine Beach. Enjoy four sunbeds, each with AED250 F&B credit, and a night brunch for four, all worth up to AED3,000. La Cantine Beach is a stunning lifestyle destination that effortlessly combines wellness, Mediterranean dining, and active living, offering the perfect escape to unwind.

To send in your Star Letter and win this prize, visit the Competitions page on **bbcgoodfoodme.com**

TALK TO US!

Email us on ***feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com***
with your thoughts and comments, and send us your photos with your copy of Good Food ME!

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on: ***@goodfoodmiddleeast***

Or, you could write to us at: The Editor, Good Food Middle East. Office 1307, DSC Tower, Dubai Studio City, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, PO Box 13700.

Photographs SUPPLIED

LOCAL ICON

Chef Nick Alvis, renowned for his former Dubai establishments Table 9 and Folly, now brings his culinary expertise to The Beam at Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort & Spa. His latest venture features a European-inspired menu, crafted with the freshest seasonal ingredients

Morning routine

My day starts at 6:30 AM when I wake the kids up, prepare them for the day and give them warm milk. Meanwhile, my wife and I share a quiet moment over coffee as we prepare for work—our daily reset before another busy day.

On my bedside table

Gordon Ramsay and Matt Abe's latest books. Though I've only managed a few pages, I know I'll get to it when the time is right. Their approach to cooking is always inspiring, I'm looking forward to reading it.

The one dish you love creating

A roast dinner. For me, creating a dish starts long before it hits the plate. It begins with notes, writing down ideas, playing with ingredients and flavours in my head. From there, I sketch out plating concepts before moving into production and testing with my senior kitchen team.

Go-to takeaway

Royal China. It's a staple for me, and always satisfying.

TOP DINING EXPERIENCE

ROW on 45 was truly unforgettable. The food, the ambience, and the entire execution of the meal were phenomenal. And on top of that, I've been fortunate enough to cook there myself, which makes it all the more special.

3 fridge staples

Tomatoes—versatile, packed with flavour, and essential for countless dishes. **Cheese**—because life without it just wouldn't be as good. And **pickled onions,** a tangy bite that elevates every meal.

If you could only dine on dishes from one TV series, which would you choose?

Without a doubt, anything from Rick Stein's TV series. Every dish he showcases is rooted in authenticity. I know I'd never get bored.

Tuning into

The *GO TO Food Podcast*. It's a great mix of industry insights, personal stories, and all things food-related. There's always something to learn or be inspired by.

Comfort food

Again, a classic roast dinner! It's my favourite thing to cook, both as a chef and as a family man.

Spotify artists

Gorgon City and Rudimental. I've also always had a soft spot for 00's indie music.

Dream guest list

I'd invite some of the greatest culinary minds—some of whom, sadly, are no longer with us. These would include Nico Ladenis - my first real introduction to the Michelin Guide and fine dining - Gordon Ramsay, who shaped my career during my seven years working with him; and Marco Pierre White, whose book White Heat inspired an entire generation of chefs, myself included. Of course, Anthony Bourdain too. His storytelling, wit, and passion for food would make him the perfect mediator among these titans of the industry. As for the menu, I'd serve a meal that reflects all of their influences—something classically European yet contemporary, with bold flavours and meticulous execution.

NEWS *nibbles*

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, across the Middle East

NURTURING TEAS

Yinli, a tea brand rooted in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and designed for women's wellness, has launched in Dubai, offering a contemporary twist on age-old healing practices. Founded by Karen Heng and Virna Artemas, Yinli draws inspiration from their childhood experiences with bitter TCM concoctions and a gap in postnatal care in Dubai. The brand blends traditional wisdom with modern tastes, offering a selection of caffeine-free teas aimed at supporting women through different stages of their wellness journey. Offerings include the Aurora, a light, restorative tea for new mothers and women's health, featuring ingredients such as dried ginger, jujube dates, longan seeds, and goji berries; the Maia, which supports reproductive health with goji berries, red raspberry leaves, and black beans; and the Floral, a robust tea for gut health with hawthorn berries, liquorice root, and codonopsis root.

Available for AED140 (20 tea bags) at yinwellness.com, Scoop Wholefoods (Springs Souk), Polline, The Lolo House and The Hood.

BEST BITE

Dubai-born cookie brand BakeMyDay (BMD) is marking the season of reflection and sharing with the launch of its limited-edition Pistachio Stuffed OG Tins, offering a delightful twist on their beloved classic cookies with a rich pistachio filling. In celebration of Ramadan, BakeMyDay engaged the local creative community by inviting emerging artists to design the exclusive tin sleeve. Following a public vote, Dubai-based artist Tamara Khodr was chosen as the winner. Her artwork, inspired by themes of rebirth and transformation, reflects her Lebanese heritage and personal journey of growth.

Available at bakemyday.ae

Photographs SUPPLIED

Effortless Iftar

Levantera's Iftar at Home Boxes from Marriott Resort Palm Jumeirah offers a convenient way to enjoy a traditional Ramadan feast in the comfort of your home. Perfect for families, intimate gatherings, or gifting, these beautifully curated boxes serve up to six guests and feature a delightful selection of Ramadan favourites, including mezze such as hummus, moutabel, and stuffed vine leaves, hearty soups like lentil or harira with lamb, signature mains such as Lamb leg ouzi and Shish taook, and an array of Arabic sweets including kunafa, baklava, and Umm Ali. Prepared fresh daily by Levantera's culinary team, each box is available for pre-order.

Daily collection from 4-8pm for AED795. Contact +9714 666 1430 or email dine.palmjumeirah@marriotthotels.com.

RAMADAN GIFTING

EVOK celebrates Ramadan by honouring the role of women in preserving cultural traditions with a specially curated Premium Hamper and Chocolate Book, designed by Emirati artist Aysha Al Hamrani. Inspired by Emirati hospitality, the hamper features luxurious treats such as premium chocolates, honey, coffee, and herbal infusions. The Chocolate Book, available on Kibsons further showcases a selection of rich, aromatic flavours ideal for Ramadan.

Available at Mercato Mall and Galleries Lafayette.

BOLD & PLAYFUL

Mama Shelter has brought its distinctive design and vivacious energy to Dubai, marking the brand's debut in the Middle East, right in the heart of Business Bay. The hotel features 197 uniquely designed rooms that combine comfort with creativity, making it a perfect base for both relaxation and exploration. With four outdoor pools, CineMama (a cosy 50-seat open-air cinema), and plenty of personality, Mama Shelter offers an exciting mix of leisure and entertainment.

Dining at Mama Shelter is all about distinctive flavours and a lively atmosphere. Make a beeline for the brasserie-style Mama restaurant, and relish Italian-inspired meals at Mama Trattoria, where fresh ingredients meet innovative twists. For a more social vibe, Mamm's Bar is the place to be—perfect for drinks, casual bites, and mingling. The hotel also offers five dynamic co-working spaces, allowing guests to seamlessly blend work with play. With its vibrant design, energetic dining options, and community-driven vibe, Mama Shelter Dubai is infusing a burst of vitality into the city's hospitality scene.

Visit mamashelter.com/dubai.

Teaming up for Temaki

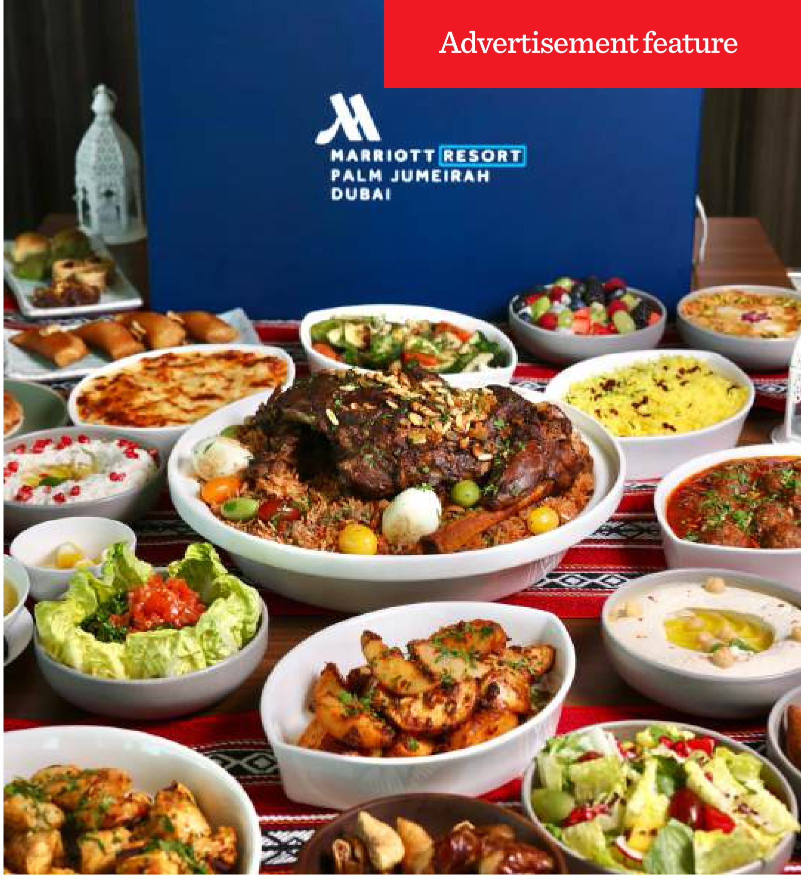
Atelier House Hospitality and Chef Neha Mishra have joined forces to create a unique dining experience in Dubai, centred around Temaki. This collaboration, set to open in the third quarter of 2025, focuses on the craft of hand-rolled sushi, offering diners a chance to savour freshly prepared temaki in an interactive setting. The concept invites diners to engage directly with chefs as they prepare each dish, making the meal as much about the experience as it is about the flavours. To complement the Temaki, the venue will feature a hidden speakeasy bar with a curated cocktail menu, further enhancing the atmosphere. Together, they aim to create a destination that will captivate food lovers with its innovative approach and interactive experience. Stay tuned for more information.

A Fresh New Addition to Dubai's Dining Scene

Discover a new European bistro dining experience at The Beam. Set in the beautiful gardens of Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort & Spa, homegrown Chef Nick Alvis presents culinary classics with seasonal ingredients.

For reservations +971 4 316 5550 | thebeamdubai.com
thebeamdubai

THE BEAM
BY NICK ALVIS



Advertisement feature

A Ramadan to Remember

Create unforgettable moments with Marriott Resort Palm Jumeirah, Dubai

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This Ramadan, Marriott Resort Palm Jumeirah, Dubai, brings the spirit of the season to life with a delightful blend of festive traditions and family-friendly experiences. From a grand Iftar to unwinding with a staycation, or hosting a memorable gathering at home, there's something for everyone to make this Ramadan truly special.

Iftar at Levantera
Diners can break their fast indoors or on the scenic terrace, where the air is filled with enticing aromas from live cooking stations. The Iftar buffet offers a celebration of regional flavours, with an array of traditional mezzes, expertly grilled meats, slow-cooked lamb ouzi, and a 'dessert souk' brimming with handcrafted sweets. Live oud and handpan performances add a soulful touch, while a henna artist offers guests a chance to partake in a beloved Ramadan tradition.

From sunset until 9pm. AED 245 per adult, AED 125 per child (6-12 years), children under 5 dine for free. Shisha starting from AED 155.

Suhoor
Levantera also offers an à la carte Suhoor menu, complemented by premium shisha. Nestled in a serene and welcoming atmosphere, this Suhoor experience allows guests to savour the peaceful moments of Ramadan.

From 11pm to 1am (Sunday to Thursday), and 11pm to 2am (Friday to Saturday). Shisha from AED 155.

Delivered to Your Door
Hosting a gathering at home? Marriott Resort Palm Jumeirah offers Iftar at Home Boxes, bringing a carefully curated Ramadan package straight to your door. Designed for up to six guests, each box comprises traditional mezze, hearty soups, grilled meats, and Arabic sweets, providing a complete and satisfying meal. Signature highlights include Lamb leg ouzi and Shish taook, with a sweet finale of kunafa, baklava, and Umm Ali rounding off the experience perfectly.

Available daily for pickup from 4-8pm. AED 795 per box. Pre-order 24 hours in advance.

The Ultimate Retreat
Nestled on the tranquil shores of Palm Jumeirah, Marriott Resort Palm Jumeirah, Dubai offers a perfect opportunity to unwind and experience authentic Arabian hospitality. Guests can book the Ramadan Retreat package, which includes an Iftar buffet at Levantera, featuring live cooking stations, mezze, slow-roasted lamb ouzi, and indulgent Arabic sweets. Suhoor is available at Levantera or in the comfort of your room. Elevate your stay with soothing spa treatments at Saray Spa, while children enjoy exciting activities at the Kids Club.

Rates from AED 1,200+++ per night for two adults and two children under 12. The offer is available daily throughout Ramadan.

Exclusive Gatherings
Whether it's a corporate Iftar, a team outing, or a larger event, tailored dining options ensure a memorable experience. Choose from semi-private spaces at Levantera or fully exclusive venues such as the West Beach Terrace, Majlis, or Grand Ballroom. Each venue offers a unique backdrop, with expert chefs crafting menus that honour Ramadan traditions and a dedicated events team ensuring seamless service.

For a more intimate celebration, Semi-Private Iftars at Levantera start from AED 225 per person (minimum 10 guests), while private venues offer customised packages for a minimum of 50 guests. Bookings (48 hours) are required. Call +9714 666 1111 or email events.palm@marriotthotels.com for more information.

For more information, contact +9714 666 1430 or visit marriottresortpalmjumeirah.com

Flavours of the month

What's hot and happening around town this month

KIYOSHI

Now open at Dubai Creek Harbour, this contemporary Japanese dining destination couples traditional Japanese design with modern architectural touches, featuring bespoke elements such as hand-painted terracotta tiles and nature-inspired installations. Guests can enjoy the striking views of Dubai Creek from the terrace or immerse themselves in the intimate indoor setting. The menu features Butternut Squash Misoyaki and Tenderloin Avocado Tower, Riverina Beef Tataki, and Honey Miso Glazed Carrots.

Contact +971 4 572 65 78.

MAIDEN SHANGHAI

Maiden Shanghai at FIVE Palm Jumeirah has just launched a thrilling new Hot Pot experience on its gorgeous Maiden Terrace, bringing interactive dining to a whole new level. The tradition of hot pot cooking allows you to prepare premium ingredients such as Wagyu ribeye and fresh mushrooms in an aromatic broth—all at your table. Whether you're a hot pot veteran or new to the scene, look forward to an evening full of flavour and laughter.

AED250 for the Maiden Shanghai selection and AED350 for the Chef's premium selection. Minimum 2 people.

Cielo

Photographs SUPPLIED

CIELO

Sundays in Dubai have found a new rhythm with the launch of El Cielo Brunch at FIVE LUXE JBR. guests are treated to a spectacular weekend experience, featuring an exquisite selection of dishes, free-flowing drinks, and an electrifying live DJ set. Enjoy live cooking stations where chefs expertly grill BBQ favourites, complemented by a premium array of drinks. With its sun-drenched terrace, panoramic views of the JBR skyline, complimentary beach access, and free-flowing sparkling grapes and concoctions, the scene is set for an unforgettable gathering.

Sunday, from 1pm to 5pm. AED349 for unlimited food, sparkling grape, house grape, and hops, AED399 for unlimited food, sparkling grape, house grape, hops, concoctions and spirits. Contact +9714 455 9999.

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BLUE DOOR

This Ramadan, Blue Door at Delano Dubai offers a unique Anatolian dining experience in a serene garden setting by the sea. The meal begins with a nourishing soup and platters of Turkish delights, including Ezine cheese, pastrami, honey, and olives, followed by mezze such as Urfa Ezme and Yaz Cacıgı. Hot starters like crispy Mücver and Manti lead into a Mixed Kebab Platter, with options like Ali Nazik, Adana Kebab, and grilled king prawns. For dessert, guests can enjoy Pistachio Baklava, Şekerpare, and Kunefe. Blue Door's Suhoor features an à la carte menu with dishes like Hatay Humus, Ali Nazik, and grilled octopus, offering a more relaxed dining option.

Iftar: Sunset to 9:30pm. AED250 per person. Suhoor: 10:30pm – 12:00am. À la carte. Contact +9714 556 6455.

REVOLVER

This Michelin Select restaurant from Singapore has finally arrived in Dubai, offering a bold dining experience that blends South Asian flavours with modern techniques. The menu centres around an open wood-fired grill and tandoor, featuring innovative dishes such as Smoked Chutoro Tartare, Burrata Street Style, and Lobster Manchurian. Complementing the fiery cuisine is a unique beverage programme, including Vol. ZERO.1, a non-alcoholic collection of creative drinks, all set within the immersive atmosphere of Revolver at The Opus by Zaha Hadid in Business Bay.

Contact +9714 2579334.

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O BEACH DUBAI

O-Brunch, curated in collaboration with Secret Parties, offers a Mediterranean-inspired feast with live entertainment and a nostalgic soundtrack of Old Skool hits and KISSTORY classics. The sharing-style tapas menu by Executive Chef Ibrahim Ata features Mediterranean and global flavours, including dishes such as Chef's Sushi Selection, Cauliflower & Truffle Croquettes, and Bang Bang Chicken. The dessert selection, including Lemon Meringue Tart and gold-dusted Caramel Éclair, ensures a decadent finish.

Saturday, from 1pm. AED295 for soft beverages, AED395 for house beverages, and AED445 for premium beverages including sparkling grape. Contact +97152 858 0464.

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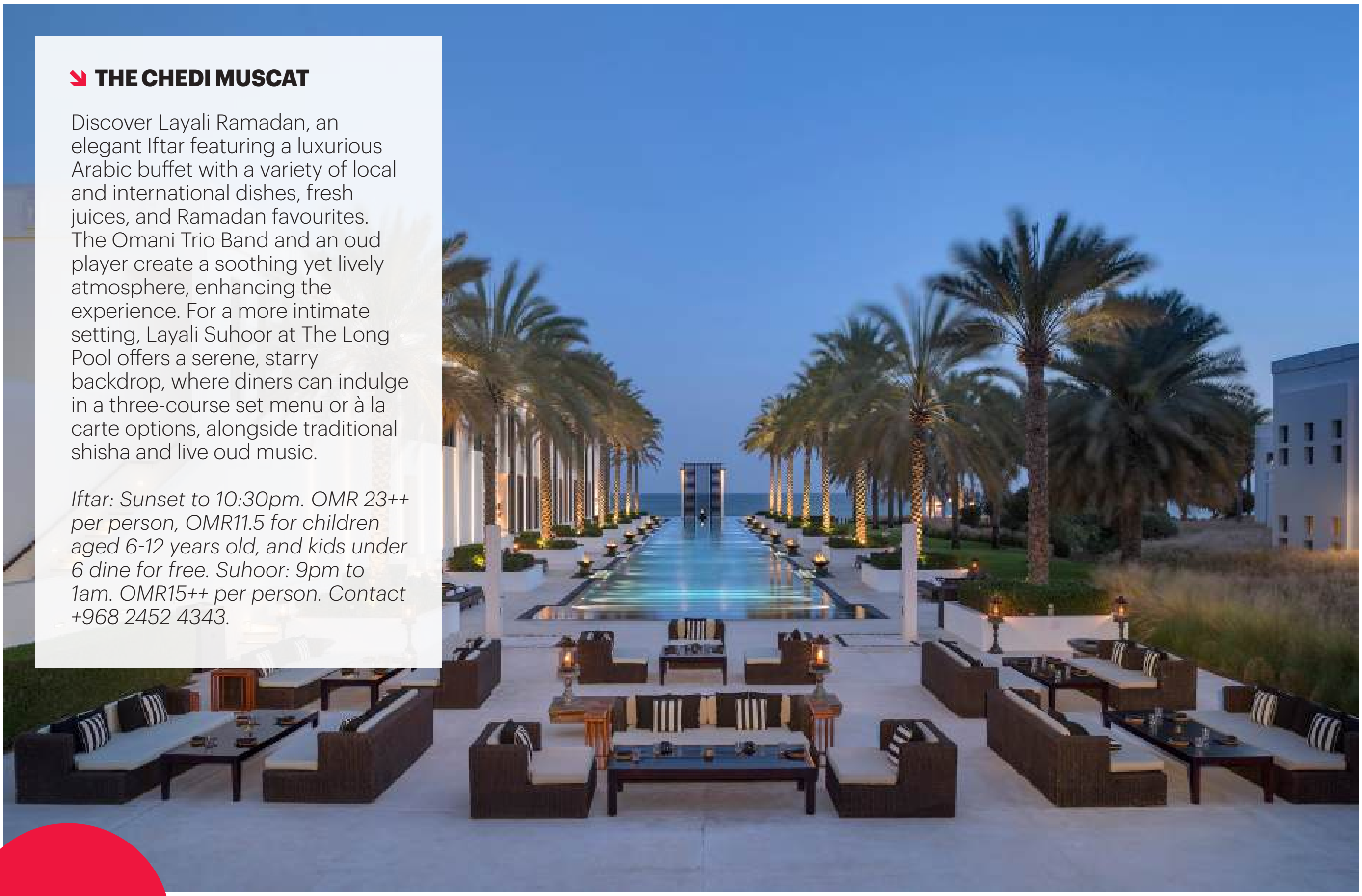
BEEFBAR DUBAI

Renowned for its international cuisine with an innovative twist, a new Iftar menu invites family and friends to break their fast in the beautiful setting of Turtle Lagoon in Jumeirah Al Naseem. The 4-course sharing-style menu includes a soup of the day, dry fruits, a variety of starters, main courses, and desserts, as well as a special Ramadan mocktail, the Tamarindi, made with tamarind, apple, lemon, ginger, and cardamom. The meal begins with dates, dry apricots, and soup, followed by starters such as Rock Corn, Kobe beef Gyozas, and Angus ravioli. Main courses feature signature dishes such as Steak Frites, Sea Bass, and Chicken Robata, finishing with a selection of desserts.

Sunset to 8:30pm. AED280 per person. Contact +9714 423 2238.

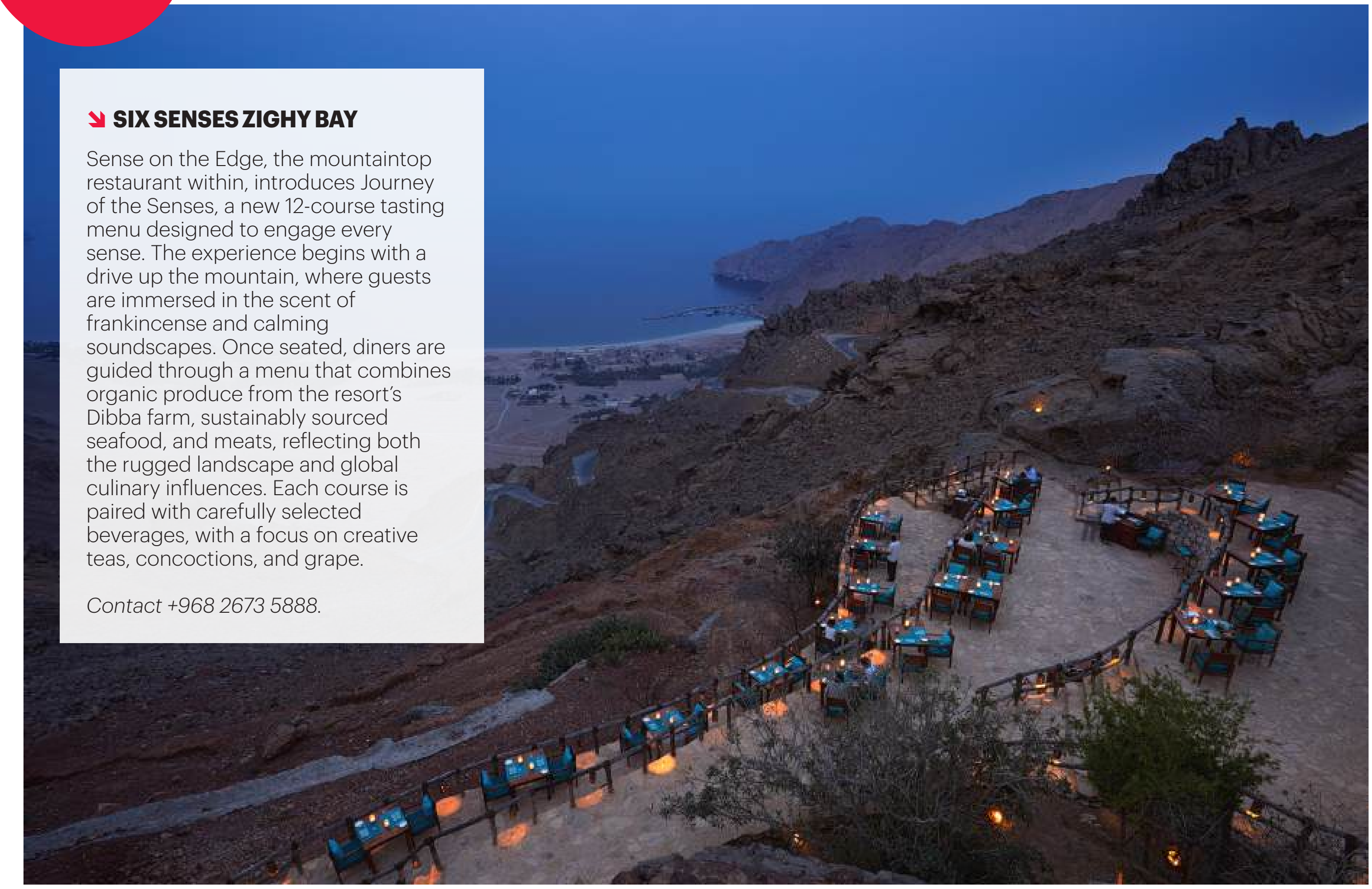


THE CHEDI MUSCAT

Discover Layali Ramadan, an elegant Iftar featuring a luxurious Arabic buffet with a variety of local and international dishes, fresh juices, and Ramadan favourites. The Omani Trio Band and an oud player create a soothing yet lively atmosphere, enhancing the experience. For a more intimate setting, Layali Suhoor at The Long Pool offers a serene, starry backdrop, where diners can indulge in a three-course set menu or à la carte options, alongside traditional shisha and live oud music.

Iftar: Sunset to 10:30pm. OMR 23++ per person, OMR11.5 for children aged 6-12 years old, and kids under 6 dine for free. Suhoor: 9pm to 1am. OMR15++ per person. Contact +968 2452 4343.

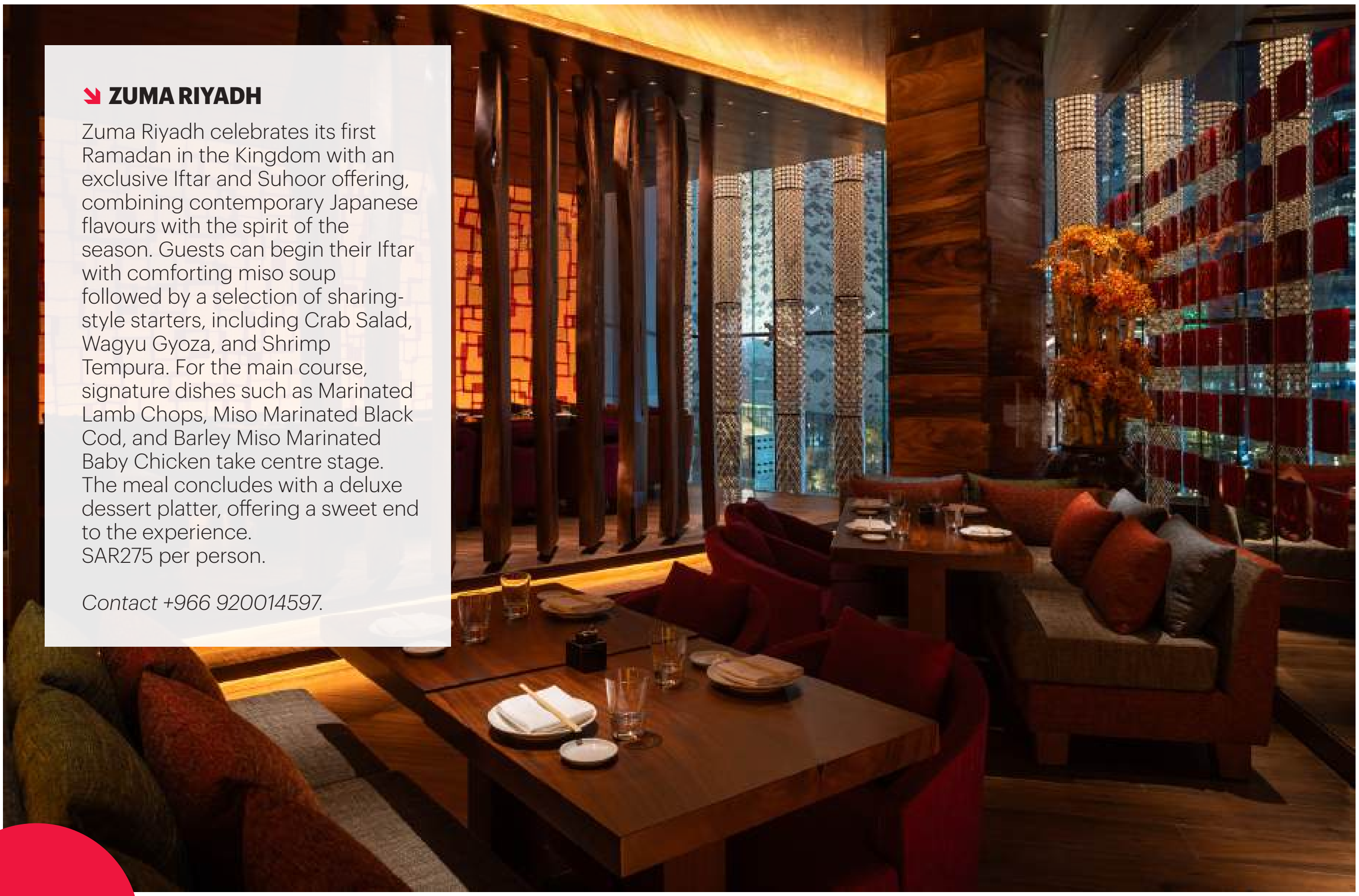
GCC



SIX SENSES ZIGHY BAY

Sense on the Edge, the mountaintop restaurant within, introduces Journey of the Senses, a new 12-course tasting menu designed to engage every sense. The experience begins with a drive up the mountain, where guests are immersed in the scent of frankincense and calming soundscapes. Once seated, diners are guided through a menu that combines organic produce from the resort's Dibba farm, sustainably sourced seafood, and meats, reflecting both the rugged landscape and global culinary influences. Each course is paired with carefully selected beverages, with a focus on creative teas, concoctions, and grape.

Contact +968 2673 5888.



ZUMA RIYADH

Zuma Riyadh celebrates its first Ramadan in the Kingdom with an exclusive Iftar and Suhoor offering, combining contemporary Japanese flavours with the spirit of the season. Guests can begin their Iftar with comforting miso soup followed by a selection of sharing-style starters, including Crab Salad, Wagyu Gyoza, and Shrimp Tempura. For the main course, signature dishes such as Marinated Lamb Chops, Miso Marinated Black Cod, and Barley Miso Marinated Baby Chicken take centre stage. The meal concludes with a deluxe dessert platter, offering a sweet end to the experience. SAR275 per person.

Contact +966 920014597.

KSA

CHOTTO MATTE RIYADH

Experience a new Iftar this Ramadan with a curated set menu that combines Japanese, Peruvian, and Middle Eastern flavours for a truly unique dining experience. From the Nikkei Lentil Soup to the Asado de Tira, each dish is thoughtfully crafted to blend global influences with the traditions of Ramadan. End the meal on a sweet note with exclusive desserts like Sticky Toffee Date Pudding and Mochi Ice Cream, available only throughout the holy month.

SAR150 per person. Contact +966 920015023.

Tried & tasted

Our top dining experiences this month

THE NINTH CUT

The Ninth Cut is an immersive experience, from start to finish. Entering through the Deli, guests pass fresh salads and sandwiches before stepping into the Butchery, where premium meats are displayed, ground to preference, and paired with a selection of rubs. A curated range of kitchen tools, specialty ingredients, and engraved knives add to the hands-on experience.

A secret door connects the Butchery to the Restaurant, making both spaces feel special. Here, diners can browse the boutique shop and personally select their cut before having it expertly prepared. The open kitchen takes centre stage, with a dramatic volcano-like cook line built on a base of rough stone, its visible flames bringing an element of theatrics to the meal. Overhead, a perforated metal canopy, designed to resemble swirling smoke, is enhanced with dynamic lighting that adds movement and depth.

The space itself is rich and welcoming, with deep brown hues complementing the natural surfaces of wood and stone. A central walk-in chiller showcases the craft of the in-house butchers, visible from both the restaurant and retail space, while an abundant display of meats celebrates global cattle breeds, cooking techniques, and marinades. Through this immersive design, The Ninth Cut brings butchery and dining together in a way that feels both engaging and distinctive.

The highlights

Starting with the burgers, the 9th Cut Burger keeps things classic but solid, with Black Angus smash patties, lettuce, tomato, white onion, pickles, and a house-made burger sauce that ties it all together. The Butcher's burger takes it up a notch with a Black Angus patty, caramelised onions, crispy onions, smoky bacon, cheddar, and BBQ sauce.

For mains, the Tandoor piri piri prawns were an easy standout. Juicy tiger prawns marinated in harissa paired with a bright mango-pineapple salsa and a side of dirty rice – it's the kind of dish that hits all the right notes. The Smoked beef cheek was another winner, with melt-in-your-mouth beef served alongside pearl couscous, pickled onions, and a deep, tangy adobo glaze.

The meal wouldn't be complete without dessert, and the Malva pudding delivered exactly what you'd hope for. Warm and comforting, it's a South African favourite served with vanilla custard and a burst of freshness from the berries on top. It's rich enough to share, but honestly, you might want to keep this one to yourself.

Book now
Visit theninthcut.ae.

JAMAVAR

The Royal Brunch offers a weekend dining experience that strikes the right balance between refined and relaxed. Jamavar, born at The Leela Palace Bengaluru, expanded to London, where its Mayfair outpost earned a Michelin star, before opening in Doha. Now in Dubai, Jamavar brings celebrated Indian cuisine to the city - elegant, confident, and all about exceptional food without pretension.

Crystal chandeliers, warm wooden tones, and plush beige seating invite you to settle in and admire the stunning artwork while dining. For those who prefer dining al fresco, the terrace offers a serene retreat surrounded by greenery.

The highlights

The Royal Brunch isn't about over-the-top claims; it delivers thoughtfully prepared authentic dishes, taking diners on a journey across India. A curated collection of signature mixes, featuring mango and saffron, complements the dishes beautifully, adding a touch that enhances the dining experience. The voyage commences in North India with appetisers such as the crisp Panipuri (deep-fried, crisp shell packed with potatoes, onions, chickpeas and spiced water) and tangy Bambaiya Bhelpuri - a refreshing take on a Mumbai street-food classic featuring a mixture of puffed rice, crisp papdi (small, flat, and round crackers) onions, and tomatoes, all tossed together with zesty tamarind chutney and a hint of lime. The Karare Aloo Chaat, however, stole the show. Crisp aloo tikkis (potato patties) are complemented by spiced white peas and homemade chutneys, topped with a cooling yoghurt. The nuanced blend of textures and flavours in this dish was a masterful balance.

The South Indian sampler follows, highlighting a crisp Butter Sada Dosa, paired with an aromatic sambhar (a stew made with lentils, mixed vegetables, spices and herbs) and an assortment of vibrant sweet, spicy and tangy chutneys. Mini Podi Idlis (delicate steamed rice cakes) are artfully tossed in a fragrant mix of roasted lentils, red chillies, and spices, offering heat and depth. Accompanying them are homemade vadas: the crisp Dal Vada and soft and airy Medhu Vada, each embodying comfort and tradition. Diners can pick one main course, with the options featuring the Old Delhi Butter Chicken, with its creamy tomato and fenugreek sauce perfectly coating tender pieces of smoky, char-grilled pulled chicken. The Sindhi Methi Gosht showcases tender kid goat slow-cooked in a rich, flavorful gravy made with spinach, cinnamon, and aromatic fenugreek leaves. The vegetarian option is a delightful Shahi Palak Paneer comprising homemade cottage cheese, spinach, tomato, fenugreek & fresh chilli. The dishes are served with grainy Jeera Pulao, Cucumber Raita & freshly baked Indian flatbreads (naan and rotis).

An Indian meal is incomplete without dessert. Offering a delectable finale is the Rhubarb Chuski Falooda with basil seeds, rhubarb & saffron rabri kulfi (frozen treat) or Gajrela, a sumptuous blend of carrots with cardamom, crushed nuts & vanilla ice cream.

Book now
Sunday from 12:30-4pm. Hard drinks package from AED395 and soft drinks package from AED295. Visit jamavarrestaurants.com.

FRESH, LOCAL & INSPIRED

Head Chef Nagbushan Shenoy remains dedicated to maintaining consistency, enhancing culinary offerings, and upholding the highest standards of food safety at Fairmont Ajman. Here he discloses all the happenings at the hotel during the Holy Month

With over 12 years of experience, Nagbushan Shenoy currently leads the culinary operations at Fairmont Ajman. As Head Chef, he oversees a wide range of dining experiences across the hotel's signature restaurants, banqueting services, and room service, ensuring exceptional food quality, outstanding service, and operational efficiency.

Describe your culinary philosophy?

My culinary style is modern, innovative, and centred around using the finest, freshest locally sourced ingredients to craft memorable and exceptional dishes. At Fairmont Ajman, we emphasize creating dining experiences that are not just about the food, but about the entire journey—a fusion of flavours, aesthetics, and service that reflect the luxury our brand is known for. I draw inspiration from both local traditions and global culinary trends, combining them with contemporary techniques to ensure that every dish tells a unique story. By focusing on seasonality and sustainability, I aim to create dishes that delight the senses while honouring our commitment to the environment and local communities. Above all, my goal is to create unforgettable experiences for our guests, where every meal at Fairmont Ajman becomes a moment of joy and cherished memories.

What is your process for creating a new menu?

Creating a new menu is both an exciting challenge and a rewarding process. It starts with understanding the unique identity of the restaurant and the guest experience we want to deliver. The focus is always on crafting experiences that are luxurious, innovative, and reflective of the local culture and surroundings. I draw inspiration from a combination of local culture, seasonal ingredients, and global culinary trends. My process starts with understanding the guest experience and tailoring dishes to the concept of the space. I focus on using fresh, locally sourced ingredients, then experiment with creative techniques to elevate flavours.

How do you keep up with evolving food trends and guest preferences?

I stay updated on food trends by exploring innovations, attending events, and collaborating with my team. However, it's not just about trends; it's about creating meaningful, sustainable experiences for our guests. I focus on sourcing fresh, local ingredients and working with artisans to reduce waste and promote mindful consumption. It's about offering dishes that delight while respecting the planet, and that's how we lead by example in the culinary world.

What is one emerging trend that excites you?

Fresh is the best. I am a very firm believer that there is no substitute or shortcut for fresh ingredients. This trend not only elevates the dining experience but also strengthens the connection to local culture and the environment.

Can you share a signature dish from Fairmont Ajman that best represents your culinary vision?

The Insalata di Barbabietole is the first dish I've crafted for GIOIA, and it perfectly embodies my love for Italy and the UAE. Every ingredient in this vibrant, flavourful salad is sourced locally, reflecting my commitment to fresh, high-quality produce. It's a beautiful marriage of my roots—born in the UAE, yet deeply inspired by Italy's rich culinary heritage. My vision for the food scene at Fairmont Ajman is to keep things fresh, local, and exciting. The flavours are bold, the colours are captivating, and each bite tells a story of connection, passion, and respect for all cultures.

How do you incorporate sustainability and food waste reduction into your kitchen operations?

At Fairmont Ajman, sustainability is a big priority in our kitchen. We make sure to use our ingredients wisely, finding ways to repurpose everything we can. We also rely on the Chefs Eye system to help us track and manage our ingredients efficiently. This allows us to reduce overproduction and waste while maintaining the exceptional quality our guests expect. By embracing these practices, we're not only minimizing our environmental impact but also ensuring we deliver memorable dining experiences that align with Fairmont's commitment to sustainability and excellence.

Tell us about the Ramadan offerings at Fairmont Ajman.

We focus on making the experience extra special for our guests. At Kiyi, our Iftar is all about indulgence and tradition with a touch of modern flair. The menu features a gorgeous mix of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean dishes, with a strong Turkish influence that reflects the restaurant's ambience. Think perfectly grilled meats, vibrant mezze, and fresh, flavourful desserts—all in a warm, welcoming atmosphere that captures the spirit of Ramadan.

Over at Spectrum All Day Dining Restaurant, we've taken our buffet to the next level this year. We've introduced live cooking stations where guests can enjoy a variety of global flavours alongside classic Ramadan dishes. Our focus is on fresh, seasonal ingredients, and we've created a vibrant, festive atmosphere that brings people together to enjoy great food in the company of loved ones. Both venues reflect the spirit of Ramadan—thoughtful, connected, and full of flavour—and we can't wait to share these experiences with our guests.

For more information or reservations, contact + 9716 701 5757 or visit fairmont.com/ajman/

easy

Delicious, simple, and easy-to-make recipes

midweek meals
one-pot wonders **p18**

Air fryer
comfort food **p24**

Cutting
food waste **p28**

One base
three meals **p30**

one-pot wonders

Using only one pan or tray, these dinners are so simple to prepare, and washing-up is easier too

recipes AILSA BURT ***photographs*** KIM LIGHTBODY

Schmaltzy lentils with chicken, olives & lemon

The golden chicken fat (schmaltz) is put to good use here to add flavour to the lentils.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY**

1 tbsp olive oil
4 skin-on chicken breasts
1 red onion, finely sliced
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 tsp sumac
1 tsp ground turmeric
500ml low-salt chicken stock
500g cooked lentils, tomato flavoured if you can get them
125g kale, finely chopped
1 lemon, half sliced and half juiced
50g green olives, pitted and roughly chopped
small handful of parsley, finely chopped, to serve

1 Heat the olive oil in a casserole dish or deep frying pan over a medium-high heat. Season the chicken all over and add to the pan, skin-side down. Cook for 6-8 mins until well browned and golden, then flip and cook for 2-3 mins until just golden, they don't need to be cooked through at this point. Remove the chicken to a plate.

2 Stir the onion and garlic into the chicken pan. Cook for 2-3 mins before stirring in the spices. Cook for 1-2 mins until fragrant, then splash in the chicken stock, scraping the bottom to remove any browned bits. Mix in the lentils, kale, lemon slices and olives. Bring to a simmer, nestle the chicken breasts back in, skin-side up and cook for 8-10 mins until reduced and the chicken is cooked through. Season with the lemon juice and some black pepper, then garnish with the parsley to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW low cal • fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 473 kcals • fat 19g • saturates 3g • carbs 19g • sugars 6g • fibre 16g • protein 48g • salt 1.52g

plan your week

We know life is busy, so to make things easier we're sharing this handy cut-out list with everything you need for our midweek meals.

SHOPPING LIST

FRESH PRODUCE

garlic
pak choi
purple sprouting broccoli
spring onions
fresh ginger
new potatoes
coriander
red onions
dill
lemons
kale
green olives
parsley
shallots
mushrooms
sage
coriander
lime

MEAT & FISH

2 smoked, peppered mackerel fillets
4 skin-on chicken breasts

STORECUPBOARD

turmeric
Szechuan peppercorns
sesame oil
tahini
Chinese five-spice
caster sugar
reduced-salt soy sauce
rice vinegar
chilli flakes
medium egg noodles
sunflower oil
garam masala
medium curry powder
low-salt chicken stock
low-salt vegetable stock
olive oil
dried oregano
tomato purée
400g can chopped tomatoes
2 x 400g can butter beans
sumac
500g cooked lentils
flatbreads
béchamel sauce

DAIRY & CHILLED

milk
feta
grated mozzarella

FREEZER

frozen sweetcorn
prawns

Per person costings do not include salt, pepper or oil

Sichuan mackerel noodles

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

- 1 tsp Sichuan peppercorns
- 2 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp tahini
- ½ tsp Chinese five-spice
- 2 small garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- 1 tbsp reduced-salt soy sauce
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- ½ tsp chilli flakes
- 140g medium egg noodles
- 2 pak choi, leaves separated
- 100g purple sprouting broccoli, cut in half
- 2 smoked, peppered mackerel fillets, skin removed

1 Set a large saucepan over a medium heat and toast the peppercorns for 1-2 mins until fragrant, then lightly crush using a pestle and mortar or use the end of a rolling pin and a sturdy bowl. Mix with the sesame oil, tahini, Chinese five-spice, garlic, sugar, soy, vinegar and chilli flakes.

2 In the same saucepan, add the noodles, pour over boiling water and cook following pack instructions. Add the pak choi and broccoli for the final 2 mins, then drain, reserving a mugful of the cooking water. Mix in the tahini sauce and a decent splash of the reserved cooking water and give it a good stir to coat. Flake in the smoked mackerel and gently fold in, season to taste and serve.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • omega-3 • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 816 kcals • fat 41g • saturates 7g • carbs 72g • sugars 10g • fibre 9g • protein 35g • salt 2.97g

Garlic mushroom flatbread pizzas

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY** **V**

- 2 shallots, halved and finely sliced
- 300g mushrooms, quartered
- 3 garlic cloves, sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- small handful of parsley, finely chopped
- 2 flatbreads
- 4 tbsp béchamel sauce
- 75g mozzarella, grated
- 6 sage leaves
- green salad, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Toss the shallots, mushrooms and garlic with the oil and some seasoning on a large baking tray. Spread out evenly and roast in the oven for 12-15 mins until just golden all over. Remove from the oven and transfer to a bowl along with any juices and mix in the parsley.

2 Arrange the flatbreads on the baking tray and spread over the béchamel sauce. Scatter over the mozzarella, cooked mushrooms and sage leaves, then cook in the oven for 6-8 mins until golden and melted. Serve cut into wedges, with a green salad on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 466 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 9g • carbs 44g • sugars 5g • fibre 6g • protein 20g • salt 0.75g

Garam masala prawn & corn soup

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 3 spring onions, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 15g ginger, grated
- 2 tsp garam masala
- 1½ tsp medium curry powder
- 600ml low-salt chicken stock
- 500g new potatoes, cut into bite-size pieces
- 200g frozen sweetcorn
- 300g prawns, defrosted if frozen
- 200ml milk
- small handful of coriander, finely chopped

To serve

- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- crusty bread

1 Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. Tip in the spring onions, garlic and ginger and cook for 2-3 mins until sizzling and fragrant. Mix in all the spices and cook for a further minute until aromatic. Splash in the stock and new potatoes. Bring to the boil and simmer for 12-14 mins, until the potatoes are almost tender.

2 Stir in the sweetcorn, prawns and milk, and cook for a further 2-4 mins until the prawns are cooked through. Season to taste, sprinkle with coriander and serve with lime wedges to squeeze over and some crusty bread on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat • low cal • vit c • iron
PER SERVING 216 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 2g • carbs 24g • sugars 5g • fibre 4g • protein 14g • salt 0.98g

Shoot director GILLIAN MCNEIL | Food stylist TONIA GEORGE | Stylist FAYE WEARS

Greek-style beans

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V**

2 tbsp olive oil
1 large red onion, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1½ tsp dried oregano
2 tbsp tomato purée
400g can chopped tomatoes
300ml low-salt vegetable stock
½ tsp caster sugar
2 x 400g can butter beans, drained and rinsed
½ lemon, juiced
50g feta, crumbled
small handful of dill, finely chopped
toasted sourdough, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a deep frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add the onions with a pinch of salt and cook for 5 mins, until beginning to soften and the edges are turning golden. Mix in the garlic, oregano and tomato purée. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 3-4 mins, stirring, until the purée turns dark red.

2 Mix in the tomatoes, stock and sugar. Swill the can out with a splash of water, then pour into the pan as well. Leave it simmer away for 10-12 mins over a low-medium heat, then mix in the beans. Stir well, then leave to simmer for 2-3 mins before seasoning to taste with salt, pepper and a little lemon juice. Serve with the feta and dill scattered over the top, with toasted sourdough on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • fibre • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 254 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 3g • carbs 26g • sugars 10g • fibre 10g • protein 12g • salt 0.41g

COOK SMART

Air fryer comfort food

Serve up cosy pub classics at home without needing to turn on the oven

recipes SAMUEL GOLDSMITH ***photographs*** KIM LIGHTBODY

Air fryer hunter's chicken

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY**

2 small skinless chicken breasts or 1 large cut in half lengthways
4-6 rashers smoked streaky bacon
3 tbsp thick barbecue sauce
40g cheddar, grated
seasonal veg, potato wedges and ketchup, to serve

1 Heat the air fryer to 190C. Wrap the chicken breasts in the bacon rashers widthways. Or, if the chicken breasts are very thick, cook in the air fryer for 10 mins first, then cook the bacon-wrapped chicken for 15 mins.
2 Brush with barbecue sauce all over and scatter over the cheese (you may not need all of it). Cook in the air fryer for another 10 mins until the chicken is cooked through. Serve with seasonal veg, potato wedges and ketchup on the side, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW gluten free
PER SERVING 403 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 9g • carbs 8g • sugars 6g • fibre 0.3g • protein 45g • salt 2.6g

Air fryer veggie sausage casserole

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

- 4-6 vegetarian sausages
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp vegetable or olive oil
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 3 roasted red peppers from a jar, sliced
- 400g can borlotti or cannellini beans
- 1 tsp red wine vinegar
- dash Worcestershire sauce (or vegetarian alternative)
- 1 tsp mixed dried herbs

1 Heat the air fryer to 180C. Put the sausages in the air fryer and cook for 5 mins. Coat the onion in the oil, then add to the air fryer and cook for a further 5 mins.

2 Combine all the ingredients in either a heatproof dish or remove the base of your air fryer basket and cook directly in the drawer. Season with salt and pepper. Cook for 20 mins until the sausages are cooked through and the sauce has thickened a little. Serve with a grinding of black pepper.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat • low cal • fibre • 4 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 329 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 1g • carbs 41g • sugars 16g • fibre 15g • protein 17g • salt 2.3g

Shoot director GILLIAN MCNEIL | Food stylist TONIA GEORGE | Stylist FAYE WEARS

Air fryer cheese & chorizo quesadillas

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 20-40 mins **EASY**

250g cheddar, grated
2 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
150g chorizo, finely chopped
½ small bunch of parsley, finely chopped
1 red chilli, finely chopped (deseeded if you prefer less heat)
6-8 spring onions, finely sliced
1 lime, juiced
8 large flour tortillas (see tip, below)
lime wedges, to serve

1 Heat the air fryer to 180C. Combine all the ingredients except the tortillas and lime in a bowl.
2 Spoon the filling onto one half of each tortilla, then fold over the other half and press down firmly. You want the filling to be near the edge but not falling out.
3 Put as many tortillas as you can into your air fryer in a single layer – it's fine if they overlap a little. Put a spoon or heatproof utensil on top to stop the tortillas coming apart during cooking. Cook for about 10 mins, turning after 5 mins until golden and crisp at the edges. Serve with the lime wedges on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • vit c
PER SERVING 663 kcals • fat 39g • saturates 20g • carbs 45g • sugars 5g • fibre 4g • protein 32g • salt 3.7g

tip

We used large tortilla wraps, but check the size of your air fryer to ensure it will fit one of these folded in half. If your air fryer is too small then you can use smaller tortilla wraps and make more or use any leftover filling for a cheese toastie.

Cutting Food Waste

Khuloud Al Nuwais, Chief Sustainability Officer of the Emirates Foundation and Secretary-General of the ne'ma Steering Committee, on how small changes can make a big impact

Food waste is a pressing issue worldwide, and the UAE is no exception. From households to hospitality, food waste stems from over-purchasing, poor meal planning, and misinterpretation of expiration dates. "Many people buy more than they need, leading to spoilage before they have a chance to consume perishable food," says Khuloud Al Nuwais, Chief Sustainability Officer of the Emirates Foundation and Secretary-General of the ne'ma Steering Committee. To combat this, ne'ma, the UAE National Food Loss and Waste Initiative, educates individuals on mindful shopping, proper food storage, and portion planning. Simple changes like creating shopping lists, buying only what is needed, and tracking expiry dates can significantly reduce waste at home.

The UAE is known for its generosity, especially during Ramadan, but this can sometimes lead to increased food waste as households over-prepare meals. "While these virtuous traits are commendable, it is easy to see how Ramadan could pose a risk of raising food waste, as households over-prepare to offer extra to those in their communities," says Al Nuwais. By preparing smaller portions, repurposing leftovers, and donating surplus food, individuals can make a difference. ne'ma plays a central role in tackling this challenge through annual Ramadan campaigns promoting mindful consumption. "This year's Ramadan campaign, 'Valuing Our Roots,' will scale our efforts to encourage community groups to participate in our giving initiatives to redirect surpluses to those in need," she explains. ne'ma also facilitates food rescue efforts through smart community fridges and redistribution initiatives, ensuring surplus food reaches those who need it most.

Beyond households, businesses also play a crucial role in sustainable food practices. "By working with hotels and restaurants to adjust portion sizes, modify serving methods, and track food waste, we've helped achieve tangible results—our work with the food services sector has achieved meaningful reductions in food waste by more than 40 percent," says Al Nuwais. Community engagement is also at the heart of ne'ma's strategy. "We launched Al Fina'a, a flagship series of interactive events designed to engage the public in practical and meaningful ways to reduce food waste," she adds. At these events, visitors can purchase surplus, seasonal, and imperfect produce at fair prices, supporting local farmers while preventing food loss.

Behavioural science is a key tool in tackling food waste, with ne'ma designing interventions based on human habits. "Many food waste issues stem from habitual actions. Through research and pilot programs, we have demonstrated that nudges—such as adjusting plate sizes in hotels, portion sizes, or how food is served—can impact food waste," says Al Nuwais. Their upcoming UAE Food Loss and Waste Baseline Study will provide deeper insights into behavioural patterns, guiding more effective interventions.

Khuloud Al Nuwais

As climate change disrupts food production, responsible consumption is more critical than ever. "With more people relying on finite resources, the strain on agricultural systems intensifies, exacerbating issues like food scarcity, waste, and environmental degradation," warns Al Nuwais. In 2024, ne'ma's efforts prevented 1.5 million kg of CO_2e emissions, showcasing the environmental benefits of reducing food waste. "Consumers are encouraged to buy local and seasonal produce and participate in food rescue programs so surplus food is eaten rather than ending up in landfills," she says. Simple habits like proper food storage, donating untouched food, or freezing leftovers can make a lasting impact.

Common Food Waste Myths—Busted!

1. Food waste is mostly a restaurant issue. In reality, households contribute significantly to the problem.

2. Imperfect fruits and vegetables are inedible. They are just as nutritious and should not be discarded.

3. Best before and use by dates mean the same thing. 'Best before' refers to quality, while 'use by' indicates safety.

The UAE is taking strides toward food security through initiatives such as ne'ma. "We are actively working toward a circular food economy, where resources are fully optimised, surplus food is efficiently redistributed, and waste is minimised and composted," explains Al Nuwais. With the goal of reducing food loss and waste by 50 percent before 2030, ne'ma is leveraging public-private partnerships, technology-driven solutions, and behavioural change programs to create a more sustainable future.

Technology is revolutionising food sustainability, with AI, smart packaging, and food-sharing apps playing a transformative role. "AI-enabled systems help optimise inventory and reduce overproduction, while smart packaging extends product shelf life and minimises spoilage," says Al Nuwais. These redistribution efforts rescued over 367,450 kg of food in 2024, benefiting more than 450,000 people. "By integrating technology with behavioural insights, we can scale these efforts and drive systemic change in food sustainability," she concludes.

With growing awareness and collective action, the UAE is making great strides toward reducing food waste. Whether at home, in businesses, or through technology-driven solutions, every step counts towards a more sustainable and food-secure future.

One base *three meals*

COOK SMART

Make a batch of spiced lentils at the weekend then use it as the base for three more meals, including a crispy filo pie

recipes AILSA BURT *photographs* HANNAH TAYLOR-EDDINGTON

Green baked eggs

The base

Coconut, curry leaf & turmeric saucy lentils

Raid your spice cupboard to make this flavour-packed lentil dish. Use puy or green lentils as they hold their shape well once cooked.

MAKES 3 batches (total around 2.2kg)
PREP 15 mins **COOK** 55 mins
EASY V ❄

- 3 tbsp ghee, or coconut oil to make it vegan
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 1 tsp black mustard seeds
- 8 fresh curry leaves
- 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 40g ginger, grated
- 1 green chilli, deseeded if you like
- 2 tsp ground turmeric
- 1½ tsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp nigella seeds
- 1.2 litres vegetable stock (ensure vegan, if needed)
- 400ml can coconut milk
- 600g dried puy or green lentils, rinsed

GF tip

This also tastes great served simply with parathas and natural yogurt.

1 Heat the ghee or oil in a large, deep saucepan over a medium-high heat. Stir in the onions, mustard seeds and curry leaves with a pinch of salt and cook for 8-10 mins, stirring frequently, until the onions are caramelised a little around the edges, and the mustard seeds have popped. Mix in the garlic, ginger, chilli, turmeric, coriander, cumin and nigella seeds. Lower the heat to medium and cook for 3-4 mins, until fragrant.

2 Pour in the vegetable stock, coconut milk and lentils. Rinse out the can of coconut milk with water and add to the pan. Bring to the boil, then stir in the lentils. Cook for 30-40 mins until the lentils are tender and it has reduced. Season to taste and divide into three batches. *Will keep chilled for five days in an airtight container, or frozen for up to three months.*

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • fibre • iron • 2 of 5-a-day
PER BATCH (730g) 286 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 7g • carbs 29g • sugars 5g • fibre 8g • protein 14g • salt 0.27g

MEAL ONE

Green baked eggs

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins plus soaking
COOK 10 mins **EASY** V

- 75g cashews
- 350ml hot vegetable stock
- 700g leftover coconut, curry leaf & turmeric saucy lentils (see left)
- 260g spinach
- 8 eggs
- crusty bread or toasted flatbreads to serve

For the drizzle

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp dukkah
- ½ tsp chilli flakes
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 Tip the cashews and stock into a blender and set aside to soak for 15 mins. Pour in the lentils and spinach and blend until vibrant, green and smooth. Pour into a frying pan and season to taste. Set over a medium heat. Once the sauce is gently bubbling, use the back of a spoon to create spaces for cracking the eggs into. Reduce the heat and cook over a low heat for 5 mins, then cover with a lid. Cook for 3-5 mins. The tops of the eggs will be cloudy but they should still have a slight jiggle and the yolks should be runny.

2 Meanwhile, for the drizzle, heat the oil in a small frying pan over a medium-high heat and tip in the dukkah, chilli flakes and garlic. Cook for 4-5 mins, until golden and fragrant. Spoon over the eggs, then serve with crusty bread, or toasted flatbreads.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 606 kcals • fat 35g • saturates 12g • carbs 35g • sugars 6g • fibre 10g • protein 33g • salt 1.0g

MEAL TWO

Curried chickpea brothy pasta

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V**

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp tomato purée
- 400g can chickpeas, drained
- 750ml vegetable stock
- 700g leftover coconut, curry leaf & turmeric saucy lentils
- 150g small pasta (we used macaroni)
- 150g kale
- flatbreads, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a deep saucepan over a medium heat. Stir in the onion with a pinch of salt and cook for 8-10 mins until softening around the edges. Mix in the tomato purée and cook for a further 3-5 mins until darkened and caramelised. Tip in the chickpeas, stock and leftover lentils. Bring to a gentle simmer and let it bubble away for 6-8 mins.

2 Meanwhile, cook the pasta according to pack instructions and drain well. Add the kale to the lentil mixture and cook for a further 5 mins. Add the pasta and stir well, season to taste and serve with some flatbreads for dipping.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING 549 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 8g • carbs 69g • sugars 9g • fibre 16g • protein 24g • salt 0.78g

Shoot director FREDDIE STEWART | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist AGATHÉ GITS

MEAL THREE

Curried filo pie

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 45 mins **EASY** **V**

- 1 small cauliflower, around 800g
- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 4 spring onions, finely sliced
- 700g leftover coconut, curry leaf & turmeric saucy lentils
- 2 tbsp lime pickle
- 100ml double cream
- 150g mature cheddar, grated
- 270g filo pastry
- 25g butter, melted
- 1 tsp nigella seeds

1 Discard any tatty outer leaves from the cauliflower, then cut the cauliflower into small florets. Thinly slice the stalk and leaves too. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium-high heat. Stir in all the chopped cauliflower and the spring onions with 100ml hot water. Cook for 10-15 mins until soft and the water has evaporated.

2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Stir in the leftover lentils, lime pickle and double cream. Bring to a gentle simmer, then remove from the heat and stir in the cheese. Tip into a baking dish (ours was 20 x 30cm) and spread out. Take each sheet of filo, tear and lightly scrunch up a bit and dot over the top of the filling, making sure the whole top is covered. Brush over the melted butter then scatter over the nigella seeds. Bake in the oven for 25-30 mins until golden and crispy.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 897 kcals • fat 50g • saturates 27g • carbs 73g • sugars 11g • fibre 14g • protein 33g • salt 1.79g

Advertisement feature

Crafted by Bateel

Embrace the spirit of Ramadan with an exquisite dining experience at Café Bateel and elegantly crafted gift sets from Bateel boutiques

Gather loved ones this Ramadan for an exceptional Iftar and Suhoor at Café Bateel, where tradition meets contemporary flair. The curated four-course menu, priced at 165 AED/175 SAR per person, highlights the best of Mediterranean flavours, comprising only the finest ethically sourced ingredients. For an added touch of cultural immersion, guests at Café Bateel's Laysen Valley and Tahlia locations in Saudi Arabia can enjoy live Oud music every Friday during Suhoor, creating a serene and enchanting ambience.

Each thoughtfully crafted dish at Café Bateel is a tribute to authenticity, offering a nourishing meal for those breaking their fast. Begin with Bateel's organic Rhutab dates and a refreshing Date Tamarind Shake, followed by a choice of Classic Lentil or Italian Bean soup. Tuck into the signature Levant Plate after, starring classics such as baba ghanoush, muhammara, dukkah labneh, Talagani cheese, and fresh pita bread. For the main course, the menu offers an array of exquisite options, from Slow Braised Lamb with fragrant Levant-style rice, to Greek Grilled Chicken made with premium corn-fed chicken from France, a delectable Scottish Salmon Quinoa, and a vegetarian Roast Pumpkin Ravioli, all made with premium, sustainably sourced ingredients.

To complete the experience, the dessert menu is a feast for the senses. Savour the Pistachio & Rose Raspberry Panna Cotta, a delicate blend of Madagascan vanilla layered with Sicilian Bronte pistachio cream, adorned with rose-marinated raspberries and paired with a buttery pistachio shortbread. For a decadent treat, the Chocolate Date Fondant fuses velvety chocolate and Bateel's signature organic dates, finished with a warm, molten centre that oozes with richness. Alternatively, the Date Trilogy offers an elegant selection of dates in three distinct flavours, while the luscious Strawberry Cake provides a lighter, fruit-based finale.

RAMADAN GIFTING

Bateel's exclusive Ramadan 2025 Collection presents a lavish assortment of organic dates, embodying the rich heritage and exceptional quality that define Arabian dates. At the heart of Bateel's legacy are its organic date farms in Al Ghat, Saudi Arabia, where a unique microclimate and pristine water sources cultivate dates renowned for their unparalleled taste and texture. The collection features revered varieties such as Ajwa, Khidri, Sokari, and the exclusive Wanan, each enhanced by indulgent new fillings such as pistachio kunafa and hazelnut praline kunafa, offering a luxe taste experience deeply rooted in tradition.

This year's collection introduces a stunning array of bespoke packaging, designed to elevate the art of gifting. Elegant gift sets, including handcrafted wooden chests, vibrant gift boxes, and bespoke trays, capture the spirit of Ramadan with a perfect blend of tradition and contemporary design. Each set can be fully customised with gourmet treats, including date chocolates, truffles, macarons, traditional maamoul, and biscuits.

Special collections such as the Oasis and Warda, with hand-painted designs by master Peruvian artisans, offer a unique touch. The Chroma collection features an elegant Chest Drawer and square gift boxes. A collection that seamlessly blends modern elegance with traditional charm. With its striking colours and intricate geometric patterns, the Chroma set is a visual delight that brings a touch of luxury. For those seeking minimalist sophistication, the Amal Collection provides a refined tribute to the season, with options for complete customisation, making it the ideal gift for loved ones and corporate clients.

The exclusive menu can be enjoyed at all Café Bateel restaurants and through their delivery platforms in the UAE and KSA. For more information, visit @cafe.bateel and @bateelgourmet on Instagram, bateel.com/café and bateel.com.

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weekend

Mouthwatering dishes to dig into with your family and friends

COOK SMART

The sticker challenge

Veg like broccoli often ends up in the reduced section, so make the most of a bargain with these vibrant lunches

recipes AILSA BURT *photographs* LIAM DESBOIS

Crunchy broccoli & cranberry salad

The broccoli brings a satisfying crunch to this super-easy salad which works well for lunchboxes.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 6 mins **EASY** **V**

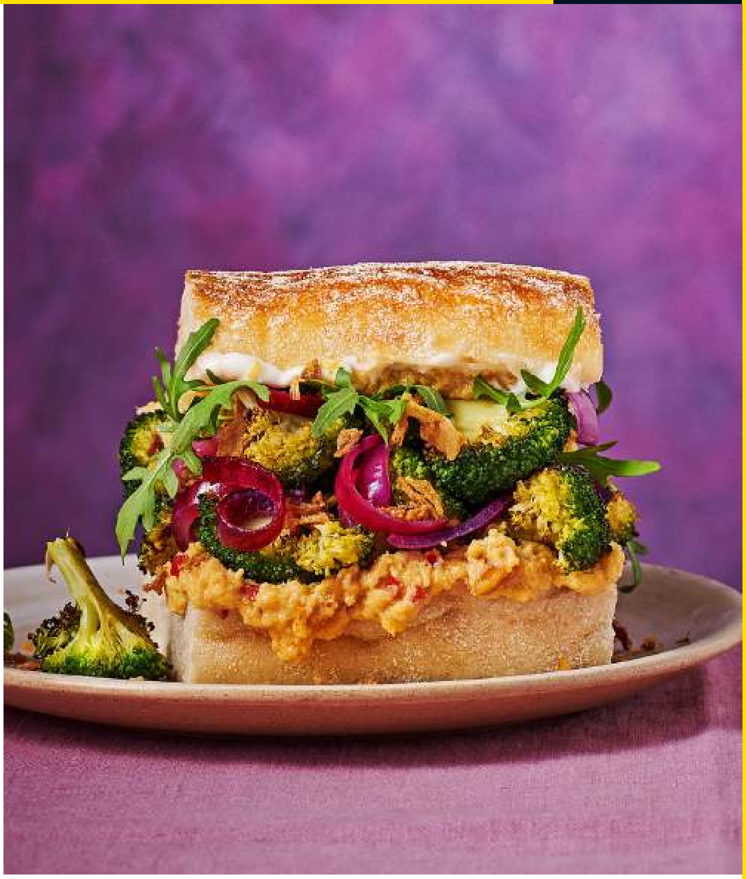
- 1 head of broccoli (around 350g)
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp garlic granules
- 60ml cold-pressed rapeseed oil or mild olive oil
- 150g kale
- 200g halloumi, cut into 1cm thick slices
- 50g dried cranberries
- 40g mixed seeds
- 50g roasted salted pecans, roughly chopped

1 Slice the florets off the broccoli and cut into bite-sized pieces, finely chop the stalk, then set aside. Spoon the mustard, lemon juice, vinegar, honey, garlic granules and oil into the bowl. Whisk well until emulsified, then season to taste.
2 Strip the kale leaves from the stalks and roughly chop, then add to the bowl of dressing. Finely chop the kale stalks and add these too, then, using your hands, rub the dressing into the kale leaves for 1-2 mins until they darken and soften. Set aside.
3 Heat a non-stick pan over a medium-high heat. Add the halloumi and fry both sides for 2-3 mins until golden brown, then transfer to a chopping board and roughly chop. Mix into the kale salad along with the chopped broccoli and most of the cranberries, seeds and pecans. Toss together well, then scatter over the remaining cranberries, seeds and pecans to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • calcium • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 577 kcals • fat 43g • saturates 11g • carbs 23g • sugars 17g • fibre 8g • protein 22g • salt 2.57g

tip

If you can't get pecans, any salted nut will do.



Roasted broccoli, red onion & peanut crunch sandwich

Spice up your lunchbox with this veggie sandwich packed with flavour and texture.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

- 1 head of broccoli (around 375g), florets trimmed and the stalk roughly chopped
- 75g roasted salted peanuts
- 1 garlic clove, roughly chopped
- 1 red chilli (deseeded if you like), finely chopped
- 1 lime, juiced
- 50ml cold-pressed rapeseed oil, plus 1 tbsp
- 1 red onion, thickly sliced
- 2 tbsp garlic mayonnaise
- 2 thick slabs focaccia or 2 ciabatta rolls
- 40g rocket or watercress
- 4 tbsp crispy onions

1 Tip the broccoli stalks into a saucepan, just cover with boiling water and add a generous pinch of salt. Bring to the boil and simmer for 8-10 mins until just tender. Drain, reserving the liquid, then tip into a food processor along with most of the peanuts, garlic, chilli, 1 tbsp lime juice and the 50ml rapeseed oil. Blitz until finely chopped, adding a splash of the cooking liquid if needed.
2 Add the remaining peanuts and pulse a few times until there is still texture in the sauce. Season to taste, adding more lime juice if needed. *Will keep chilled for up to four days.*
3 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Tip the broccoli florets and the red onion into the roasting tin with the remaining 1 tbsp oil. Toss together with some seasoning and roast in the oven for 25-30 mins, shuffling the contents of the pan around once or twice, until the broccoli is charred at the edges. Remove and set aside.
4 Spread the mayonnaise over the base of the focaccia or rolls. Top with the roasted broccoli and onions, spoon over some of the broccoli peanut sauce, top with a handful of rocket and sprinkle over the crispy onions. Add the top half of the bread, squish together and enjoy.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 1,063 kcals • fat 75g • saturates 10g • carbs 60g • sugars 13g • fibre 12g • protein 29g • salt 2.01g

Shoot director LAURIE NEWMAN | Food stylist ROSIE REYNOLDS | Stylist MAX ROBINSON

CELEBRATE TRADITION & TOGETHERNESS

Experience a unique Ramadan Iftar at Emirates Golf Club, blending traditional West Asian and North African flavours with modern culinary twists by Chef Bethany Kehdy

Step into a world where tradition meets innovation, as Emirates Golf Club presents a truly unforgettable Iftar experience. In collaboration with renowned Chef Bethany Kehdy and Executive Chef Dayan Anthony, this exclusive culinary journey reimagines the flavours of West Asia and North Africa (WANA). Take a seat within the serene Royal Majlis and embrace the spirit of Ramadan while indulging in a menu that beautifully blends heritage with contemporary flair.

Chef Bethany Kehdy's passion for WANA's vibrant culinary heritage shines through in her dedication to preserving and reimagining the region's traditional flavours. With roots in Beirut and summers spent on her family's farm in the Lebanese mountains, Chef Kehdy has made it her mission to revive and honour the area's rich gastronomic history. Partnering with Chef Dayan Anthony, whose innovative approach at Emirates Golf Club blends modern techniques with timeless flavours, this Iftar is a beautiful fusion of the past and present.

Dine with us

As you step into The Royal Majlis, the scent of incense and the soft glow of lanterns envelop you in a warm, calming ambience. A traditional welcome of dates, Jallab, and Gahwa invites you to pause, savour the moment, and prepare for an evening teeming with culture and conversations over food.

The Iftar spread is a fusion of inventive flavours, with standout dishes such as hummus adorned with aromatic za'atar pesto, the vibrant tang of beetroot mutabal topped with crisp apple salsa, and Beiruti tabbouleh, where fresh herbs awaken the palate. Begin your Iftar with a comforting bowl of lentil soup or silky, spiced harira and lamb and beef sambousek. For mains, tuck into a succulent eight-hour slow-braised lamb shank, perfectly complemented by smoky freekeh pilaf. Venture to live cooking stations for an interactive dimension to the evening and savour succulent ouzi with Arabic-spiced rice, craft your ideal pasta, and relish oriental mixed grill featuring tender chicken tikka, juicy lamb kofta, and harissa-spiced fish. Other highlights include seafood machboos, saffron-infused chicken fatteh, aromatic vegetable biryani, and expertly grilled Samak mashwi with roasted vegetables and vermicelli rice.

As the perfect finale to this Iftar, indulge in an assortment of decadent traditional desserts. Expect rich, syrup-soaked kunafah nabulsi, the delicate crunch of assorted baklava, and the comforting warmth of Umm Ali—each a perfect reflection of the season's sweet traditions. For those craving a touch of the familiar, an array of international treats awaits, from velvety chocolate mousse to creamy rice pudding and seasonal fresh fruits, offering the ideal sweet conclusion to your evening.

Available from sunset until 9pm. AED295 per person inclusive of soft beverages, and AED95 for children between 5-12 years old. Children below 5 dine for free. Every Saturday and Sunday, children aged 12 and below dine for free.

Visit www.dubaigolf.com/royaliftar, email emiratesdining@dubaigolf.com or contact +9714 417 9999.

Surprising SUNDAY LUNCHES

Stuck in a roast dinner rut? Try one of our enticing new ideas for your next weekend get-together

recipes GOOD FOOD TEAM *photographs* CHELSEA BLOXSOME *and* JAMES LEE

Sausage, miso & savoy cabbage one-pan roast

Spring green chicken stew with cheddar dumplings

When spring is just around the corner but there's still a chill in the air, make this transitional Sunday lunch. Fresh pesto lifts the flavour of this stew, but you can substitute it with a jar if you have one that needs using up.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 2 hrs **EASY** ❄ P

2 tbsp olive oil
8 skinless, boneless chicken thighs
100g smoked bacon lardons, pancetta or chopped bacon
1 large onion, chopped
1 leek, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tbsp plain flour
100ml non-alcoholic white wine
500ml chicken stock
2 bay leaves
100g fresh pesto
small bunch of basil
80g watercress
100g frozen peas

For the dumplings
125g butter
200g self-raising flour
75g extra mature cheddar, grated

1 Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole dish over a medium-high heat and brown the chicken on all sides until golden all over (you may have to do this in batches). Remove to a plate and set aside.

2 Fry the lardons in the dish for a few minutes, then add the onions and leeks. Cook over a medium heat for 8-10 mins until the vegetables have softened. Stir in the garlic and cook for another minute, then add the flour. Season and cook for 2 mins more.

3 Slowly stir in the wine and cook until it has bubbled away, then stir in the stock. Return the chicken to the dish along with the bay leaves and cover with a lid. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 45 mins-1 hr, or until the chicken is tender. *Once completely cool, the stew will keep frozen for up to three months. Defrost in the fridge overnight, then reheat in a pan before continuing.*

4 Put the pesto, most of the basil, the watercress and a ladleful of hot liquid from the dish in a food processor or blender. Blitz to a loose green paste, pour into the stew and add the peas. Remove from the heat.

5 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. To make the dumplings, rub the butter into the flour until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Mix in half the grated cheese and some seasoning, then add 110ml water, mixing it in using a cutlery knife to form a light, sticky dough. Break off walnut-sized lumps of the dough and shape into small balls.

6 Put the dumplings on top of the stew, then scatter over the remaining cheese. Transfer the dish to the oven. Bake for 25 mins until the dumplings are golden brown and cooked through. Scatter over the remaining basil to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • fibre • vit c • iron • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 1022 kcals • fat 65g • saturates 28g • carbs 57g • sugars 8g • fibre 7g • protein 46g • salt 3.44g

Shoot director BEN CURTIS and RACHEL BAYLY | Photographer JAMES LEE | Food stylist AMY KINNEAR | Stylist JO HARRIS

Sausage, miso & savoy cabbage one-pan roast

Infuse umami flavours such as miso, tahini and mirin into this hearty sausage and butter bean traybake for a low-key but flavour-packed dinner.

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 45 mins **EASY**

bunch of spring onions
2 tbsp sesame oil
3 tbsp mirin
2 tbsp white miso
1 lime, juiced
1-2 tsp chilli flakes, or to taste
8 sausages (we used Cumberland-style)
1 large savoy or sweetheart cabbage, trimmed and cut into 4-6 thick wedges, with the root left intact
15g ginger, peeled and finely grated
2 large garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp rice vinegar
1 tbsp tahini
2 x 400g cans butter beans

1 Finely slice the white ends of the spring onions and set aside. Finely shred the green tops, plunge into a bowl of cold water and set aside.
2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Combine 1 tbsp of the sesame oil with 1 tbsp each of the mirin and miso, a splash of the lime juice and most of the chilli flakes. Tip the sausages and cabbage wedges into a large roasting tin and brush over the glaze, making sure both sides of the cabbage wedges are coated. Roast for 20 mins.
3 Meanwhile, combine the finely sliced spring onion ends with the remaining sesame oil, miso, mirin, lime juice, chilli flakes, the ginger, garlic, tahini and rice vinegar in a large bowl. Drain one can of butter beans and add these to the bowl, then tip in the other can of butter beans (including the liquid) and stir well. Fill one of the cans a third of the way up with water, then pour into the bowl and stir to combine.
4 After 20 mins, remove the sausages and cabbage from the tin to a plate, and pour the butter bean mixture into the tin. Nestle the sausages and cabbage wedges on top, and cook for 20-25 mins more until the liquid has reduced and the sausages are browned. Drain the shredded spring onion tops and scatter these over, then serve.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (6) 355 kcals • fat 18g • saturates 5g • carbs 25g • sugars 8g • fibre 11g • protein 17g • salt 1.46g

Mushroom jalfrezi pie

Inspired by the Indian classic, this pie is made extra-special by working spices into the pastry. It's sure to please a crowd.

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 40 mins plus chilling **COOK** 1 hr **EASY** V

1kg mushrooms, sliced
2 tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil
1 onion, sliced
1 red pepper, chopped
3 garlic cloves, crushed or finely grated
1-2 green chillies, finely chopped (deseeded, if you like)
2 tsp ground cumin
2 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp ground turmeric
2 tsp garam masala
400g can chopped tomatoes
120g spinach

For the pastry

200g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
100g wholemeal plain flour (or use more plain flour)
150g cold butter, cut into cubes
1 tbsp caraway seeds
1 egg yolk or ½ tbsp plant milk (if using egg yolk, freeze the white to use in another recipe), plus extra for brushing

1 For the pastry, put the flours and butter in a food processor. Blitz until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs (you can also rub them together using your fingers). Tip in the caraway seeds and pulse to combine. Add the egg yolk or plant milk and pulse again until you have a soft dough. If needed, add more plant milk or water, ½ tsp at a time, just to bring the dough together. Chill for 20 mins.

2 Tip the mushrooms into a large frying pan. Cook over a medium heat until the liquid has been released and evaporated, about 15 mins. Drizzle in the oil, then add the onions and peppers. Fry for 8-10 mins until the mushrooms are golden and the veg has softened.

3 Stir in the garlic and chillies and cook for 1-2 mins until fragrant. Add the spices, stir and cook for 1 min before adding the tomatoes and half a can of water. Stir, then cook for 5-10 mins until thickened slightly, adding a little water if needed to loosen. Add the spinach and cook for a few minutes to wilt.

4 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Tip the mixture into a pie dish. Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured surface until ½cm thick and large enough to cover the dish. Lay it on top and crimp the edges to seal. Poke a couple of holes in the top for steam to escape, then brush with some egg yolk or plant milk. Bake for 30-35 mins until golden.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 2 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING (6) 486 kcals • fat 27g • saturates 14g • carbs 44g • sugars 6g • fibre 7g • protein 13g • salt 0.51g

Lemon & dill rainbow trout with pickled potato salad & radish slaw

Whole trout is a great alternative to a traditional meat roast, as it still feels special, but cooks a lot more quickly, with minimal prep. The potato salad and slaw are fresher, lighter sides, with a nod to the new season's produce.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 30 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

- 4 medium rainbow trout, gutted and cleaned
- 1 lemon, sliced, plus extra wedges to serve
- handful of dill
- olive oil, for roasting and drizzling

For the slaw

- 200g radishes, cut into matchsticks
- ½ hispi cabbage, core removed and finely shredded
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- 2½ tbsp white wine vinegar
- pinch of sugar

For the pickled potato salad

- 1.5kg new potatoes, halved or quartered if large
- 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
- ½ tbsp honey
- 3 tbsp mayonnaise
- 10 cornichons or 5 gherkins, finely chopped
- 10 silverskin pickled onions, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 3 tbsp soured cream
- 1 tbsp finely chopped dill
- 1 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- 1 tbsp finely chopped chives

1 For the potato salad, boil the potatoes in a pan of salted water for 10-15 mins until fork-tender. Drain well, then tip back into the pan and leave to steam-dry for a minute. Mix in the vinegar, honey and some seasoning, then leave the potatoes to absorb the dressing as they cool.
2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 or an air fryer to 180C. Stuff the fish cavities with the lemon slices and a few dill sprigs. Rub all over with oil, put on a baking tray and season inside and out. Squeeze over a few lemon wedges, then roast or air-fry for 20 mins until the fish skin is lightly golden and the flesh is flaky when pressed.
3 Meanwhile, mix all the slaw ingredients together in a non-metallic bowl and season well. Put the cooled potatoes in a serving bowl and stir in the remaining salad ingredients, and season. Taste and add a splash more vinegar, soured cream or mayonnaise, if needed. Serve the roasted trout with the potato salad, slaw and the remaining dill scattered over.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 725 kcals • fat 30g • saturates 6g • carbs 58g • sugars 10g • fibre 10g • protein 49g • salt 1.12g

Shoot director RACHEL BAYLY | Food stylist ROSIE REYNOLDS
Stylist HANNAH WILKINSON

Jamaican joy

Food writer **April Jackson** transports us to Jamaica with traditional dishes

photographs LIAM DESBOIS

Jamaican oxtail

After taking part in BBC One's *The Apprentice* in 2015, April opened her Brixton restaurant Three Little Birds named after the Bob Marley song. She has since appeared on ITV's *This Morning* sharing recipes rooted in her Jamaican upbringing, as well as on her social media channels. *@apriljjackson*

Jamaican fried dumplings

Jamaican oxtail

This is a dish with roots in resilience and resourcefulness, originating from the working-class communities that made the most of inexpensive cuts of meat. Traditionally slow-cooked, the oxtail becomes tender, falling off the bone, with its rich flavour enhanced by herbs and spices.

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 10 mins plus overnight marinating
COOK 2 hrs 30 mins-3 hrs **EASY**

2 onions, roughly chopped
2 spring onions, roughly sliced
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tbsp ginger, finely chopped
12g thyme sprigs, leaves picked
90ml soy sauce
1kg oxtail (ask your butcher to cut into 1-inch thick chunks)
3 tbsp cornflour
2 tbsp sunflower oil
2 scotch bonnet peppers (add more if you prefer more heat)

To serve

cooked white rice, rice and peas or Jamaican fried dumplings (see below)

1 Tip the onions, spring onions, garlic, ginger, thyme leaves, soy sauce, a large pinch of salt and 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper into a bowl. Mix well and add the oxtail, turning to coat. Chill overnight, or for at least 12 hrs.

2 When you're ready to cook, remove the oxtail from the marinade (reserving the marinade), put on a plate and dust lightly with the cornflour. Heat the oil in a large, deep saucepan or casserole dish and sear each piece of oxtail on both sides, around 2-3 mins each side, working in batches. Set the oxtail aside on a plate, then pour the reserved marinade into the saucepan and cook for 2-3 mins, scraping the bottom with a wooden spoon to release any browned bits.

3 Return the oxtail to the pan, then add enough water to just cover the meat (around 800ml should suffice). Mix in the scotch bonnets, then bring to boil. Cover and cook on low for 2 hrs 30 mins-3 hrs until the meat falls off the bone. Season to taste and serve with cooked white rice, rice and peas or fried dumplings (below).

GOOD TO KNOW iron
PER SERVING (6) 386 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 8g • carbs 14g • sugars 6g • fibre 2g • protein 35g • salt 2.72g

April's tip

If you can't get your hands on oxtail, I have found that this recipe also works with short rib, which is a cheaper cut of meat, too.

Jamaican fried dumplings

These dumplings are a cherished staple; perfectly golden with a slightly crispy exterior and doughy centre with a hint of sweetness. My aunt used to make the best fried dumplings. On Saturdays, I would hover over her Dutch pot as they bobbed up and down in the oil, generously offering to "help" cook so that I could devour them before they even got to the dinner table.

MAKES 12 **PREP** 5 mins plus resting
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V**

260g self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting
8g salt
30g caster sugar
5g baking powder
vegetable oil, for shaping and frying

1 Dust a baking tray with flour. Mix all the dry ingredients in a bowl, then slowly pour in 150ml water, stirring until a dough forms. Rub a little oil over your hands, then break off bits of the dough and roll into golf-sized balls. Set aside on the prepared tray to rest for 20 mins.

2 Put a deep, large saucepan over a medium heat and pour in enough oil so that the dumplings will be submerged (and no more than two-thirds full). Heat the oil to 170C, or until a pinch of the dough sizzles when dropped in. Fry the dumplings for 6 mins, turning halfway. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on a plate lined with kitchen paper. Serve hot. Try serving with any meat stew.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan
PER SERVING 134 kcals • fat 4g • saturates 0.4g • carbs 19g • sugars 3g • fibre 1g • protein 2g • salt 0.96g

April's tip

Don't reheat the dumplings in the microwave, otherwise they'll lose their crispy texture.

Jamaican ginger cake

This is a rich, moist cake known for its warm, spiced flavour and dark, caramel-like colour. Rooted in Jamaica's colonial history, where British and African culinary influences mingled, it originally became popular for its use of ginger, molasses, and dark sugar – ingredients that thrived on the island. Originally baked in hearth ovens, the cake became a symbol of home comfort and celebration.

SERVES 8-10 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 1 hr 20 mins **EASY** **V**

120g unsalted butter, softened, plus a little extra for the tin
285g plain flour
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 tsp baking powder
2 tsp mixed spice
1 tbsp ground ginger
200g light brown soft sugar
2 eggs
2 tsp vanilla extract
80ml stem ginger syrup (from a jar of stem ginger), plus extra to glaze
50ml honey
110ml coconut milk

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Butter and line a 900g (2lb) loaf tin with baking parchment. Mix the flour, bicarb, baking powder, mixed spice, ginger and 1/2 tsp fine salt in a bowl.

2 Tip the butter and sugar into a separate bowl, and beat together using an electric whisk, until smooth and fluffy, around 3-5 mins. Add the eggs, vanilla, stem ginger syrup, honey and coconut milk, and beat until evenly mixed.

3 Tip in the dry ingredients and gently fold the batter until no streaks of flour remain, taking care not to over-mix. Pour the batter into the prepared tin and bake on the middle shelf of the oven for 45-55 mins, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Remove and brush over a little stem ginger syrup. Leave in the tin until completely cooled, then cut into slices to serve. *Will keep for up to a week in an airtight container.*

PER SERVING (10) 367 kcals • fat 13g • saturates 8g • carbs 56g • sugars 25g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.49g

Shoot director LAURIE NEWMAN | Food stylist JESSICA RANSOM | Stylist MAX ROBINSON
April Jackson portait DAVE BENETT/GETTY IMAGES ENTERTAINMENT

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MEMBER OF All

Bistro hits

Impress friends with this easier-than-it-looks French-style menu

recipes BARNEY DESMAZERY

photographs HANNAH TAYLOR-EDDINGTON

Comté gougères

Comté gougères

Filling the gougères with the optional comté crèmeux is what transforms them from a snack or drinks nibble to a starter.

MAKES 20 **PREP** 30 mins
COOK 50 mins **MORE EFFORT**

100ml milk
50g butter
125g plain flour
4 eggs
150g comté, grated
For the filling (optional)
35g butter
20g plain flour
100ml whole milk
100ml double cream
200g comté, grated, plus extra finely grated comté to serve

1 Heat the oven to 220/200C fan/ gas 8. Put the milk, 100ml water and the butter in a medium pan over a low heat and warm until the butter has melted and the liquid is simmering. Stir in the flour and continue to cook, stirring, until the mixture comes away cleanly from the side of the pan. Transfer to a bowl and whisk in the eggs, one at a time, then beat in the cheese and some seasoning.
2 Spoon the mixture into a piping bag, snip off the end and pipe about 20 rounds over two baking trays lined with baking parchment. Use a finger or fork dipped in water to gently press down any peaks. Bake for 20 mins, or until the gougères are puffed up, deep golden and crisp. Leave to cool.
3 If you're making the filling, melt the butter in a pan over a medium-low heat. Whisk in the flour to form a sandy paste. Slowly whisk in the milk and cream, and continue to cook until the mixture thickens. Stir in the cheese to melt, season, then remove from the heat and cool completely. Once cool, transfer to a second piping bag. Snip off the end.
4 Using a skewer, poke holes into the bottoms of the gougères that are big enough to fit the end of the piping bag. Pipe in the filling, then arrange four on each plate and scatter over more grated cheese.

PER GOUGÈRE 170 kcals • fat 13g • saturates 8g • carbs 6g • sugars 1g • fibre 0.3g • protein 7g • salt 0.29g

Moules marinière

A classic moules marinière is a very simple dish made with just five ingredients, so it's a good crowd-pleaser when entertaining.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

2kg mussels, cleaned and debearded
25g butter
2 shallots, finely sliced
250ml non-alcoholic dry white wine
handful of flat-leaf parsley, chopped

1 Rinse the mussels under cold running water, discarding any that are cracked or open and won't close when tapped sharply on the side of the sink. Drain well. Melt the butter in a large, deep pan that has a lid over a medium heat and cook the shallots with a little salt for 3-4 mins until softened.
2 Turn up the heat and tip in the mussels, then pour in the wine, cover and cook for 4-5 mins, giving the pan an occasional shake until all the mussels have opened. Scatter over the parsley and season with a little black pepper, then turn everything over using a large serving spoon. Divide the mussels between four bowls and spoon over the cooking liquid. Serve with the cheat's frites and aïoli (see recipes, right) on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW iron • gluten free
PER SERVING 225 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 4g • carbs 1g • sugars 1g • fibre 0.4 • protein 25g • salt 1.53g

tip

Cheat's frites

- To cook in an air fryer, heat the air fryer to 200C. Put **500g frozen fries** in the air-fryer basket and shake into a single layer. Drizzle over a little **sunflower oil** and toss to coat. Cook for 10 mins, then turn over and cook for 10 mins more until crisp and golden. Season with salt and serve.
- To cook in the oven, drizzle **1 tbsp sunflower oil** in a shallow roasting tray and heat in the oven at 220C/200C fan/gas 8. Carefully scatter **500g frozen fries** over the tray and turn over to evenly coat in the hot oil. Bake for 15 mins, then turn over and bake for 10-15mins more until golden. Season with salt and serve.

Easy aïoli

Crush **2 large garlic cloves** into a paste using a pestle and mortar or the back of a knife, then mix with **100ml shop-bought mayonnaise** and **1 tbsp lemon juice**.

Gâteau basque

Get ahead for your dinner party by preparing this dessert up to two days ahead.

SERVES 8-10 **PREP** 30 mins plus 1 hr chilling and cooling
COOK 50 mins **MORE EFFORT** **V**

- 250g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 140g cold butter, diced, plus extra softened butter for the tin
- 100g golden caster sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

For the pastry cream and filling

- 400ml whole milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 egg yolks (freeze the whites to use in another recipe), plus 1 egg, beaten, to glaze
- 100g golden caster sugar
- 40g cornflour
- 25g butter
- 100g cherry jam (optional)

1 Combine the flour, baking powder and a pinch of salt in a large bowl. Rub in the cold butter using your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar, egg and vanilla, and knead together until a dough forms. Divide into two equal portions, shape into discs, wrap and chill for at least 1 hr. *Will keep chilled for up to 24 hours.*

2 To make the pastry cream, heat the milk and vanilla in a saucepan until just simmering. Whisk the egg yolks, sugar and cornflour together in a heatproof bowl until pale and smooth, then slowly pour in the hot milk mixture, whisking continuously. Pour the mixture back into the pan and cook over a medium heat for 4-5 mins, stirring continuously until thickened. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter until smooth. Cover with a disc of baking parchment, ensuring it's touching the surface of the cream, to prevent a skin from forming. Leave to cool.

3 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and butter a 22cm round tart tin. Roll out one of the pastry discs on a lightly floured surface until it's large enough to line the base and side of the tin, then gently press it into the tin, leaving any excess overhanging the rim. Spread the jam over the base, if using, then beat the cooled pastry cream until smooth and carefully spread this over the jam layer (or the plain base). Roll out the second pastry disc as before, then gently lay it on top of the pastry cream, pressing the edges together to seal. Trim off the excess pastry and use a fork to crimp the edges. Brush over the beaten egg and press a fork into the surface to create a crosshatch pattern, if you like.

4 Bake for 40-45 mins, or until the pastry is golden brown. Cool completely in the tin before removing to a serving plate. Slice and serve at room temperature. *Will keep chilled for up to two days.*

PER SERVING (10) 362 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 9g • carbs 47g • sugars 27g • fibre 1g • protein 6g • salt 0.53g

Shoot director FREDDIE STEWART | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist AGATHÉ GITS

Cymru
Wales

CELEBRATING WELSH CULINARY EXCELLENCE

From the freshest water, the creamiest cheese to the most succulent meats, Welsh cuisine continues to captivate and delight globally.

Wales's rugged coastlines, flowing rivers, majestic mountains, and lush green grass not only create a stunning landscape, but also support a rich heritage and culture. This vibrant backdrop underpins a diverse and thriving food and drink industry.

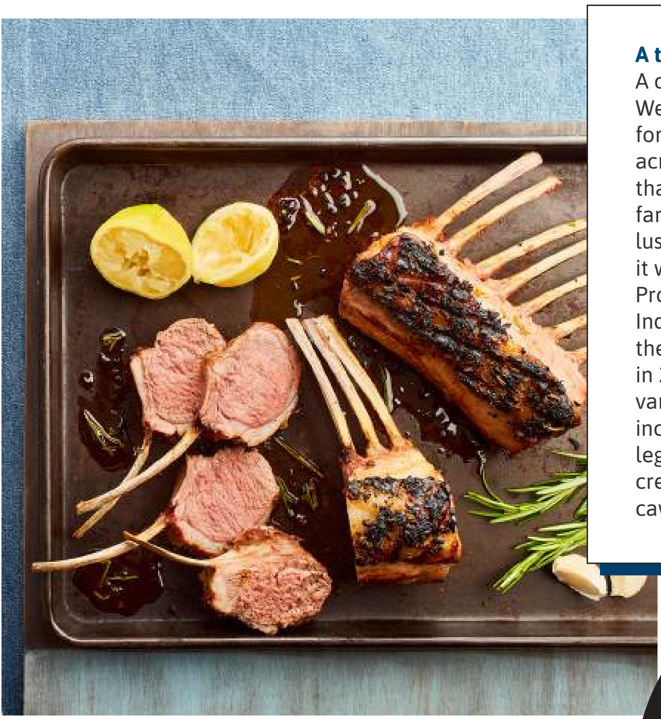
With unique regional flavours and techniques that have enchanted top chefs worldwide, Wales combines natural resources and stunning landscapes with a focus on innovation. This blend allows tradition to be reimagined while maintaining quality and provenance. Responsible farming and fishing, B Corp accreditation, eco-friendly packaging, and a fair work ethos define the industry, with a stated aim of creating one of the most environmentally and socially responsible food and drink supply chains globally.

In the UAE, you can savour a variety of delicious Welsh products. For seafood lovers, The Lobster Pot offers premium lobster and sweet crab, perfect for a special meal. Meat enthusiasts will appreciate PGI Welsh Lamb, known for its exceptional quality and flavour. Sweet treat lovers can enjoy Hilltop Honey's organic and hot honey varieties, adding a unique twist to dishes or try free from wheat treats from Lovemore with their scrumptious biscuits, cakes, puddings and more.

Or you can indulge in award-winning cheeses from Golden Hooves, Calon Wen, Snowdonia, Caws Cenarth and Dragon, paired with Cradocs Savoury Biscuits, as well as preserves, jams, chutneys and sauces, such as from Welsh Lady Preserves and Radnor Preserves. While finishing the meal with delicious yogurts from Rachel's Organic and Llaeth y Llan, all washed down with the purest water from Tŷ Nant and Llanllyr Source.

Delving into the heart of Welsh food and drink

These Welsh products truly bring a taste of Wales to the UAE, offering a chance to experience the rich culinary heritage and innovative flavours of Wales right at home.



A true taste of Wales
A cut above the rest, PGI Welsh Lamb is renowned for its quality and taste across the globe, and thanks to the traditional farming methods and lush pastures of Wales it was granted coveted Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status from the European Commission in 2003. You can find a variety of Welsh Lamb cuts, including shanks, racks, and legs. These are perfect for creating hearty dishes like cawl or a classic roast.

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Welsh gold
Offering a range of premium, natural honey products, Hilltop Honey's range is versatile, and can be used in everything from sweetening your tea to adding a unique twist to savoury dishes like pizza or chicken wings.

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Cheese delights
Producing award-winning cheeses from sustainably sourced milk, Golden Hooves is committed to regenerative farming. Their range includes Mature Cheddar, Vintage Cheddar, and the recently launched Double Gloucester. These cheeses are perfect for a cheese board or as an ingredient in various dishes.

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At its best

PLANET FRIENDLIER

Our head of food **Cassie Best** shares new ideas using seasonal watercress, beetroot and rhubarb

photographs LIAM DESBOIS

Beetroot

A versatile root veg, beetroot can be boiled, roasted, pickled or even grated raw into salads. The young leaves can be picked fresh and eaten raw, too, while mature leaves can be wilted and used like spinach. There's a wide variety of beetroot to grow, with orange, yellow and pink cultivars to choose from.

Pink eggs & beetroot with yogurt & chilli butter

Beetroot juice gives the poached eggs a pretty pink hue, making this salad special enough for entertaining. Serve as part of a breakfast or lunch spread for friends, with warmed flatbreads for scooping up the garlicky yogurt, eggs and beetroot wedges.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 1 hr **EASY** **V**

2 tsp coriander seeds
4 medium beetroots, trimmed (see tip)
100ml red wine vinegar
2 tbsp caster sugar
2 bay leaves
1 red chilli
4 eggs
250g thick Greek-style yogurt or labneh
1 garlic clove, grated
1 tbsp dukkah
small bunch of dill, leaves picked
flatbreads, to serve
For the chilli butter
50g butter
1 lemon, zested and juiced
2 tsp Aleppo chilli flakes

1 Tip the coriander seeds into a dry frying pan and toast over a medium heat for a few minutes until aromatic. Remove from the heat and add the beetroots (no need to peel first), vinegar, sugar, bay leaves and 2 tsp salt. Pierce the chilli all over a few times using a knife, then add to the pan. Pour in enough water to cover the beetroots completely, then bring to a simmer over a low-medium heat and cook for 45 mins, topping up with more water if needed, until tender. Scoop the beetroots into a bowl using a slotted spoon and leave to cool slightly (reserve the cooking liquid for dying the eggs). Once cooled, remove the skins. *The beetroots will keep chilled for up to five days.*

2 Boil the eggs in a pan of water for 7-8 mins (7 mins if they're room temperature, or 8 mins if fridge-cold). Immediately plunge into a bowl of cold water and leave until cool enough to handle, then peel. Drop the peeled eggs into the reserved beetroot cooking liquid and leave for 30 mins – this will dye the eggs pink. (You can leave them for longer, if you like – the pink water will continue to further permeate the eggs the longer you leave them.)

3 Mix the yogurt or labneh with the garlic and a pinch of salt, then spread this over a large serving plate. For the chilli butter, melt the butter in a pan, then stir in the lemon zest and chilli flakes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

4 Cut the beetroots into wedges and arrange on top of the yogurt. Halve the boiled eggs and arrange these on top too, then pour over the hot chilli butter. Season with the lemon juice and a pinch of salt, then scatter over the dukkah and dill. Serve with warmed flatbreads for scooping up the buttery yogurt.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 343 kcals • fat 24g • saturates 12g • carbs 15g • sugars 13g • fibre 5g • protein 15g • salt 1.41g

tip
Don't throw away the trimmed beetroot leaves – young, tender leaves can be eaten in a salad, while tough leaves can be cooked in a similar way to chard, in a stir-fry or wilted with some garlic to serve alongside steak.

Watercress

The peppery leaves of watercress are most commonly enjoyed in salads and soups. And, while usually found growing wild in flowing streams, it can easily be grown in a container or garden pond.

Watercress pearl barley risotto with brown butter hazelnuts

Pearl barley creates robust, nutty texture and, while it takes longer to cook than rice, it's worth the effort. Dairy adds richness – we've gone for a triple hit with brown butter, mascarpone and goat's cheese.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 50 mins **EASY** V
❄ risotto only

- 2 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 200g pearl barley
- 800ml-1 litre vegetable or chicken stock
- 80g watercress, plus extra leaves to serve
- 50g mascarpone
- ½ lemon, zested and juiced
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 20g parmesan or vegetarian alternative
- 50g butter
- 50g hazelnuts
- 50g soft goat's cheese (vegetarian, if needed)

1 Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and cook the onion for 8-10 mins until softened. Stir in the garlic and cook for another 1-2 mins until softened but not coloured, then add the pearl barley and stock.

2 Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 40-45 mins, stirring often and topping up with water if needed, until the barley is tender and all the stock has been absorbed.

3 Put most of the watercress in a food processor along with the mascarpone, lemon juice, mustard, parmesan and a splash of water. Blitz until the mixture is the consistency of smooth pesto.

4 Melt the butter in a frying pan over a low-medium heat and toast the hazelnuts for 5-10 mins until the nuts are golden and the butter is a nutty brown colour.

5 Add the watercress pesto to the risotto, season well, then add another drop of lemon juice, if needed. Cook for another few minutes until the consistency loosens – it should resemble rice pudding. (Add another splash of water to loosen, if needed.) *Once completely cool, the risotto will keep frozen in an airtight container for up to two months. Defrost in the fridge overnight, then reheat thoroughly in a pan with a splash of water to loosen.* Ladle into shallow bowls and top with the toasted hazelnuts, brown butter, chunks of goat's cheese, the lemon zest and the remaining watercress leaves.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 1136 kcals • fat 72g • saturates 30g • carbs 93g • sugars 10g • fibre 6g • protein 27g • salt 2.7g

Rhubarb

Easy to grow and producing masses of edible stalks every year, it's no wonder rhubarb is so popular with home gardeners. Though, strictly speaking, a vegetable, it's considered one of the earliest 'fruits' of the year. By forcing it in late winter, it can be harvested as soon as March. Stew it for crumbles or porridge, or use to make cordials. (The leaves are poisonous, so compost those.)

Roasted rhubarb & rose eton mess

Bring a pop of pink to your dessert with seasonal forced rhubarb. To save time, use shop-bought meringues – you'll need eight, as they're smaller than the homemade ones in this recipe.

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 30 mins plus 1 hr cooling and chilling
COOK 1 hr 15 mins **EASY** **V**

4 egg whites (freeze the yolks for another recipe)
250g golden caster sugar
400g thin rhubarb stalks (choose ones that are deeply pink), cut into 2-3cm batons
1 orange, juiced
450ml double cream
2 tbsp icing sugar
1 tsp rosewater (see tip)
50g pomegranate seeds
50g slivered pistachios
crystallised edible rose petals, to serve (optional)

1 Heat the oven to 150C/130C fan/gas 2 and line a baking tray with baking parchment. Put the egg whites in a large, clean bowl along with a pinch of salt, and whisk using an electric whisk until white and billowy – they should be doubled in volume. Add 200g of the caster sugar, a spoonful at a time, whisking continuously. When the sugar has been fully incorporated, whisk for another minute until the meringue is thick, glossy and holds stiff peaks.

2 Dollop spoonfuls of the meringue onto the baking tray using a large metal spoon, spacing them out evenly (you should get about six in total). Bake for 1 hr, then turn the oven off, leaving the tray inside for at least 1 hr to cool. Once cooled, remove from the oven and set aside. *The meringues will keep in a sealed container for up to a week.*

3 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Arrange the rhubarb in a roasting tin, sprinkle over the remaining 50g sugar and tip in the orange juice. Roast for 15 mins until the rhubarb is tender. Pour the roasting juices into a saucepan and simmer over a medium heat for 5 mins until syrupy. Leave the rhubarb and syrup to cool, then chill until you're ready to assemble. *Can be prepared two to three days ahead.*

4 Pour the cream into a large bowl with the icing sugar and rosewater. Whisk until softly whipped, then gently fold through a drizzle of the rhubarb syrup.

5 Crush a few of the meringues over a large platter, then dollop over spoonfuls of the whipped cream. Spoon over the rhubarb, then add another layer of crushed meringues, whipped cream and rhubarb. Drizzle over any leftover syrup, then scatter over the pomegranate seeds, pistachios and crystallised rose petals, if using.

GOOD TO KNOW 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (6) 629 kcals • fat 44g • saturates 25g • carbs 52g • sugars 51g • fibre 2g • protein 6g • salt 0.15g

tip

Rosewater can vary hugely in potency – add just a drop to start, then add a little more if you still want more flavour.

Shoot director LAURIE NEWMAN | Food stylist ROSIE REYNOLDS
StylistMAX ROBINSON

Next level

BEEF HOTPOT

Try our comforting twist on the traditional one-pot meat stew to warm up

recipe BARNEY DESMAZERY ***photograph*** LIAM DESBOIS

This beef hotpot takes the classic recipe to the next level with red wine marinated melt-in-the-mouth beef shin, stewed swede and carrots, and thinly sliced potatoes crisped to perfection. Where other hotpots can lack in flavour, this is based around a rich, hearty stew that would work on its own but is then adorned with an integrated side dish.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 30 mins plus at least 2 hrs marinating **COOK** 2 hrs 30 mins
MORE EFFORT

1kg beef shin, cut into large chunks (about 4-5cm)
300ml red wine
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tbsp butter
2 onions, sliced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
4 carrots, cut into chunks
1 small swede (optional), peeled and cut into chunks
1 tbsp plain flour
1 tbsp tomato purée
500ml beef stock
bouquet garni (3 bay leaf, thyme and parsley stalks, tied together)

For the topping

1kg medium potatoes, thinly sliced to the thickness of 2.8mm
large sprig of thyme, leaves picked
75g butter, melted
thyme leaves, to serve (optional)

1 Tip the beef into a dish, season and pour over the wine. Cover and marinate in the fridge for at least 2 hrs, or overnight if possible. Once marinated, remove the beef and pat it dry. Reserve the wine for later.

2 Heat the oven to 170C/150C fan/gas 3. Put a large ovenproof frying pan or flameproof casserole dish over high heat and add half the oil. Brown the beef in batches, ensuring each piece has a good crust. Remove the browned beef and set aside. Pour in the rest of the oil and add the butter to the pan. Fry the sliced onions for 4-5 mins until lightly browned, then add the garlic and cook for 2 mins more. Add the carrots and swede, and cook for a further 2 mins.

3 Stir in the flour, cooking it for about 2 mins until it forms a sandy paste, then stir in the tomato purée and cook for 3 mins more. Gradually pour in the reserved red wine, stirring constantly until smooth. Add the beef stock and bouquet garni, then bring everything to a boil. Cover the casserole and bake for 1 hr 30 mins before giving everything a good stir.

4 While the stew is cooking tip the potatoes into a bowl and massage in a good pinch of salt then toss in the thyme leaves and butter and set aside until needed.

5 When the stew has cooked for 1 hr judge how much space the potatoes will have in the pan or dish. They need to come to the top to cook properly. If you think they'll sit halfway down, tip the stew into a shallower dish, then lay the the potatoes over so they are better exposed to the heat. Arrange in tight concentric circles and drizzle with any butter left in the bowl.

6 Turn the oven up to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Put the hotpot back in the oven and cook for a further 1 hr until the potatoes are crisp at the edges and cooked through. Turn on the grill, if your oven has one, to finish crisping the potatoes. Leave to stand for 5-10 mins, then serve the hotpot with thyme leaves scattered over and buttered greens on the side, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 883 kcals • fat 37g • saturates 16g • carbs 63g • sugars 13g • fibre 10g • protein 54g • salt 0.79g

Shoot director LAURIE NEWMAN | Food stylist TROY WILLIS | Stylist TABITHA HAWKINS

Our top tips

MAKE IT TENDER
Marinating the beef in red wine overnight adds depth and tenderness, infusing bold flavours before it even hits the pan.

ENRICH THE SAUCE
The reserved wine creates a rich sauce, balancing the beef's richness with acidity.

THE RIGHT CUT
Beef shin is ideal for slow cooking – it becomes incredibly tender and juicy after simmering in the rich sauce.

SLICED NOT DICED
Sliced onions give the stew more body and the potatoes a good base to sit on.

A TOUCH OF SWEETNESS
Adding chunks of swede lends subtle sweetness and extra depth to the beef and red wine sauce.

LEARN SOMETHING *new*

What is masala?

Directly translated, masala means spice mix, but it is so much more. It tells a story, shaped by geography, local ingredients, and the dish its being used in. I've marvelled at the diversity of masalas across the Indian subcontinent, where even neighbouring households have their unique blends.

A masala can vary depending on what's cooking. The spices for a fish curry – often featuring fenugreek, mustard seeds, and turmeric – are worlds apart from those used for robust mutton dishes, which might include cumin and cloves. Even with goat and beef, the blends differ based on the richness and depth you're aiming to achieve.

Also, each region's cooking style and local spices shape the masalas, making it possible to identify their origin just by tasting them. In southern India, masalas often involve darker, roasted spices, giving them a deeply earthy profile which is a contrast against the lighter, more fragrant blends of Lucknow or the vibrant, punchy masalas of West Bengal.

Masala isn't limited to dry spice blends, either. In some areas, whole spices are soaked and ground into pastes, creating a fresh and intense base for curries and marinades. These pastes often use ingredients like garlic, ginger and chillies alongside the spices, adding another layer of complexity.

Masalas are deeply personal. They reflect the cook's hand, family traditions, and even the shopkeeper who blends the spices. No two masalas are ever alike. Even garam masala is versatile – some recipes call for it early in the cooking and others, a sprinkling at the end to preserve its aroma.

Tips for creating your own masala

- **Start with whole spices** Ingredients like cumin, coriander, cardamom, and cinnamon are excellent foundations.
- **Toast for depth** Lightly roasting spices releases their oils and enhances flavour.
- **Incorporate regional influences** Think of the region you're inspired by and select spices accordingly.
- **Store properly** Keep your blends in airtight containers, away from light and heat, to preserve their potency.

Aktar Islam is the first chef to earn two Michelin stars for Indian cuisine outside London with his flagship restaurant, Opheem. Aktar is known for innovating the classics, appearing on *The Great British Menu* and *MasterChef: The Professionals*. He also owns meal delivery service Aktar At Home. *@aktarislam_ @opheemrestaurant @aktarathome*

WHOLE VS GROUND SPICES

Both whole and powdered spices have their place. Personally, I tend to work with whole spices, roasting and grinding them to unlock their full flavour. This process adds a depth and freshness that's hard to beat. However, certain staples like turmeric and chili powders are always on hand in my pantry. While we often make our own chilli powders from dried chillies, I find it practical to keep a variety of ready-made ones, as well as turmeric powder, which we seldom grind ourselves. Ultimately, it depends on the recipe, sometimes a mix of both works best.

Sharpen your Indian cookery skills with **Aktar Islam**, chef patron at Birmingham's only two-Michelin-starred restaurant Opheem

Micro skills

ROASTING SPICES

A lot of recipes say to toast whole spices in a dry hot pan. Though this is an easy way to brown them, there is more chance the spices will burn and cook unevenly, and when they burn they taste bitter and acrid. Instead, I like to scatter them on a tray and roast them at 115C which is the perfect temperature for them to release their natural oils and become more fragrant without burning. Don't forget that grinding spices (especially in an electric grinder) will also cause heat through friction that wakes up their flavour, too.

All about the base

The trio of onion, garlic and ginger is the backbone of Indian cooking, but how you prepare them depends on the dish. Ginger and garlic pastes are versatile and time-saving for everyday cooking. I keep both separately and combined in a 60:40 ginger-to-garlic ratio. For onions, I avoid pastes. Raw onion paste lacks the depth that caramelised onions bring – those golden edges are crucial for flavour. Whether diced, sliced, or puréed after caramelising, the prep shapes the dish's final taste and texture.

Ghee whiz

Made by heating butter to separate the milk solids, ghee delivers rich, nutty notes when the solids brown slightly. Use it as a cooking base, in marinades, and even to dress grilled dishes for added depth. By culturing butter with yogurt or infusing ghee with aromatics like black cumin or caramelised onions, it becomes a tool to create layers of flavour. Whether drizzled over pilafs or brushed onto roasted vegetables, ghee is essential for elevating Indian dishes to the next level.

THE ONE

We asked Aktar, 'What's the one…'

…dish you cook at home better than anyone else?

Jerk chicken, from a recipe my Bajan childhood friend and I perfected together. Based on a traditional recipe, it's aromatic with pimento, scotch bonnet, and thyme. The sweetness comes from basting with orange juice, creating a balance of bold, smoky, and citrussy flavours.

…mistake home cooks often make?

Not cleaning as they go. Keeping your space tidy while prepping and cooking makes the process more enjoyable and less stressful. It's a simple habit that eliminates a daunting pile of mess at the end, turning cooking into a more rewarding experience.

…piece of kitchen kit you couldn't cook without?

A good set of knives. Sharp, well-maintained knives make all the difference. Before putting them away, I always clean them and give a few strokes on the steel, ensuring they're ready to slice effortlessly next time.

…dish you judge a restaurant on?

I judge a restaurant by its bread. It must be homemade, not reheated, bought-in loaves. Bread reflects the chef's care and creativity. Dining out should showcase food made with love, labour, and soul, not mass-produced convenience. It's about experiencing something truly crafted, not just served.

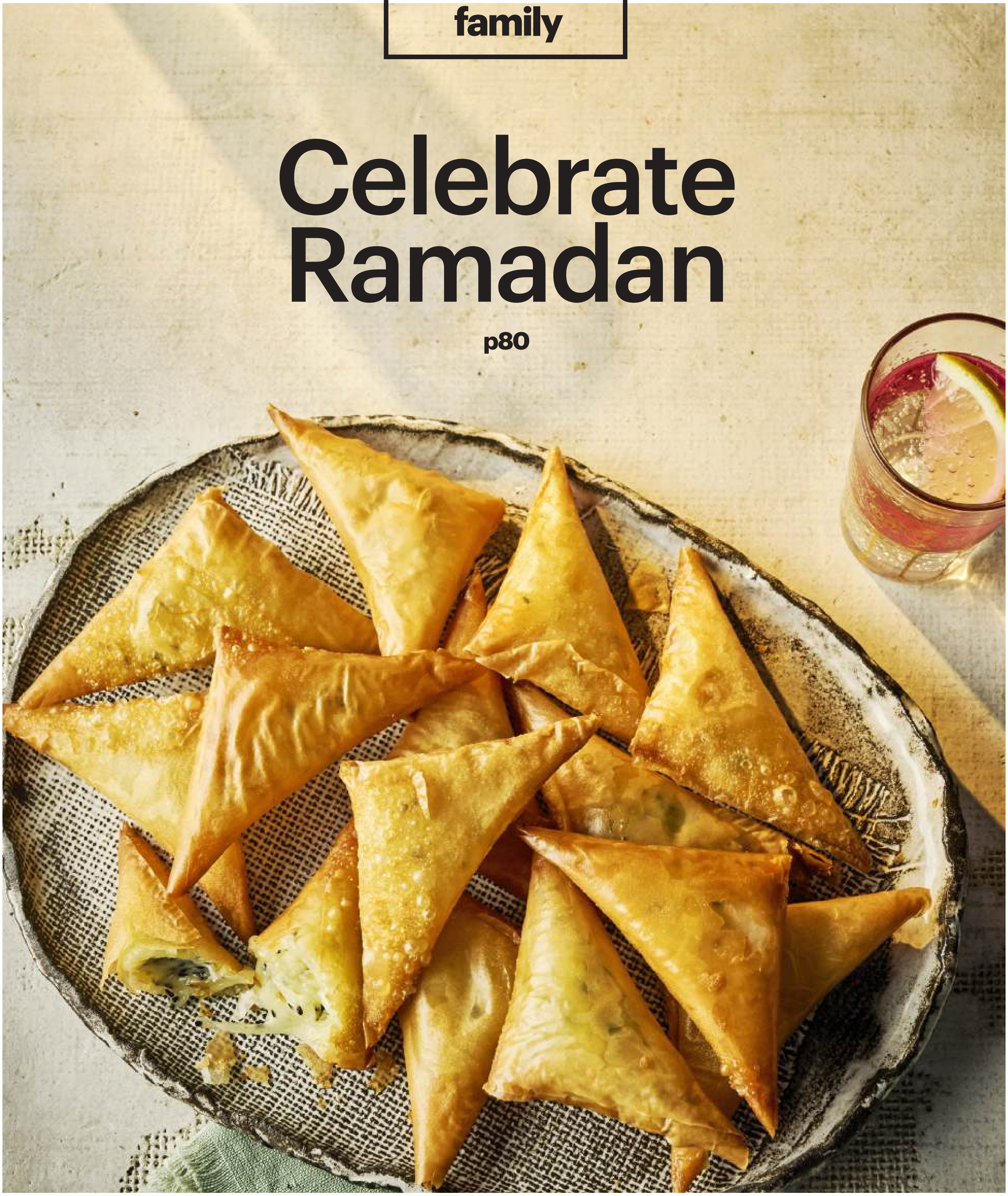
…dessert you can't not order?

Bread and butter pudding. You don't see it as often these days, but it's timeless. Especially this time of year, it's the ultimate comfort – rich, warming, and nostalgic. For me, it's one of the best desserts you can enjoy.

…sustainable British ingredient we should be eating more of?

Wild venison. I cook it two ways in my restaurant on the same dish; I barbecue the loin and serve it rare and I braise the haunch and shred the meat, then roll it into a ball and crumb it.

Photographs DAVID COTSWORTH, ENVIROMANTIC, SYNERGEE/E+, ANNICK VANDERSCHELDEN PHOTOGRAPHY/MOMENT, ROB MELNYCHUK/PHOTODISC, WESTEND61/GETTY



Celebrate Ramadan

p80

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A month of celebrations **p73**

Cake Tin: Super sesame **p80**

family

A month of *celebrations*

With spring comes many festive occasions – mark them with innovative recipes from top food creators

photographs CHRIS TERRY

Celebrating
Eid
30-31 March

Naan gosht (lamb curry)

Naan gosht (lamb curry)

Naan gosht is a popular Indian speciality dish. Traditionally, it's made for special occasions, like weddings and Eid, and served with fluffy naan to mop up the rich, spicy gravy. It's so aromatic, every mouthful is full of flavour from the caramelised onions and warm spices. It's a nostalgic dish for me, so it holds amazing memories of my childhood. ***Anisa Karolia***

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 2 hrs 45 mins
EASY ❄

5 tbsp vegetable oil
2 cinnamon sticks
2 bay leaves
4-5 black peppercorns
4-5 cardamom pods
4-5 cloves
1 tsp cumin seeds
3 onions, finely chopped
200g can chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp ginger paste
1 tbsp garlic paste
1kg diced mixed lamb (we used shoulder and leg)
1 tsp ground turmeric
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tbsp ground cumin
1 tsp mild chilli powder
2 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
1 tsp tandoori masala
2 tomatoes, finely diced
2 tbsp tomato purée

To serve
handful of coriander, roughly chopped
2-3 finger chillies, sliced (optional)
baby potatoes (see tip, right), cooked rice or naan

1 Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat and fry the whole spices for about 20 seconds until they start to sizzle. Add the onions and a pinch of salt, and fry gently until they are meltingly soft, deeply browned and rich, about 20 mins. Do not rush this part – this step is important, as the overall colour of the curry depends on it. Meanwhile, tip the chopped tomatoes into a food processor and blitz until smooth, or use a hand blender and a jug. Set aside.

2 Add the ginger and garlic pastes to the pan and cook for 30 seconds. Add the lamb, 2 tsp black pepper and the turmeric, and stir well to coat. Cover and cook over a medium heat for 15 mins, then remove the lid and cook for a further 15 mins until the liquid from the meat has evaporated and the oil comes to the top and side of the pan.

3 Add the ground coriander and cumin, both chilli powders, the tandoori masala, diced tomatoes, blitzed tomatoes and tomato purée, and cook until the tomatoes soften and dissolve, about 4-5 mins.

4 Season with salt and add 500ml water, depending on how thick you want the curry. Simmer until thickened and the meat is tender, about 1 hr 30 mins-1 hr 45 mins. If the sauce needs to be reduced slightly, simmer, uncovered, for a further 15 mins. Garnish with the coriander, sliced chillies and potatoes (see tip, below), and serve with rice or naan.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • iron • 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 726 kcals • fat 52g • saturates 18g • carbs 13g • sugars 10g • fibre 6g • protein 48g • salt 0.8g

tip

Peel and halve 5-6 baby potatoes, deep-fry until cooked through and golden, and pop them into the curry just before serving. See our tips for deep-frying at *goodfood.com*.

Hara bhara kabab

These vegan patties are a popular snack in North India, with a green tint from the spinach. You can serve them with your favourite chutney – we went for mango. ***Chetna Makan***

MAKES 12 **PREP** 30 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY** **V** ❄

500g Maris Piper potatoes, cut into quarters
130ml sunflower oil
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
50g kale, finely chopped
50g spinach, finely chopped
50g frozen peas
½ tsp chilli powder
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp amchur (mango powder)
3 tbsp cornflour
chutney, to serve

1 Tip the potatoes into a pan of cold water. Salt well and bring to the boil, then simmer for 12-15 mins until tender. Drain well and set aside to cool.

2 Heat 2 tbsp of the oil in a pan over a medium heat and add the garlic cloves. After a few seconds, add the kale, cover and reduce the heat to low for 5 mins. Add the spinach and peas, cover and cook over a low heat for a further 5 mins. Remove from the heat and tip into a food processor. Blitz to a coarse paste.

3 Tip the paste into a bowl with the boiled potatoes, spices, cornflour and 1/2 tsp salt. Mash well and divide into 12 slightly flattened balls.

4 Heat the remaining oil in a deep frying pan and cook the kebabs for 1-2 mins on each side until golden. Serve with a chutney of your choice.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • gluten free
PER SERVING 94 kcals • fat 5g • saturates 0.4g • carbs 10g • sugars 1g • fibre 1g • protein 1g • salt 0.3g

Celebrating
Holi
14 March

Mississippi mud pie pancake cake

Turn crêpes into a showstopper cake by layering them with chocolate custard, then topping with whipped cream and a double serving of sauces for the ultimate indulgence. Prep this the night before, then serve on the day as an after-dinner treat. ***Esther Clark***

Celebrating
Shrove
Tuesday
4 March

SERVES 10 **PREP** 1 hr plus resting and at least 2 hrs 30 mins chilling **COOK** 30 mins **EASY** **V**

3 tbsp cocoa powder
3 eggs
450ml milk
1 tbsp vegetable oil, plus extra for frying
150g plain flour
1½ tbsp sugar

For the chocolate custard filling
500g fresh vanilla custard
150g dark chocolate (at least 75% cocoa solids), chopped
1 tbsp cornflour
180ml double cream

For the chocolate sauce (optional; or use shop-bought)
100g dark chocolate (at least 75% cocoa solids)
120ml double cream
1 tbsp golden syrup

For the topping
300ml double cream
1 tsp vanilla bean paste
3 tbsp caster sugar
6 tbsp salted caramel sauce
40g toasted blanched hazelnuts, roughly chopped
3-4 crème-filled (such as Oreo) or bourbon biscuits, broken into small pieces

1 Mix the cocoa powder with 1 tbsp boiling water to make a paste – this will help bring out the chocolatey flavour. Put the eggs, milk and oil in a large jug or bowl with a pinch of salt, and whisk until smooth. Tip the flour and sugar into a separate bowl and whisk in half the wet ingredients until smooth, then add the other half and mix. Whisk in the bloomed cocoa mixture – it should be a similar consistency to single cream. Set aside for 30 mins.

2 Brush a 25cm crêpe or non-stick frying pan with a little oil. Pour in around half a ladle of batter, then swirl around the pan to make a thin crêpe. After a minute, flip over and cook on the other side. Set aside on a plate. Repeat with the remaining batter until you have a stack of crêpes. Leave to cool.

3 To make the custard filling, warm the custard in a saucepan over a low heat, then stir through the chopped chocolate. In a small jug, mix the cornflour with a 2-3 tbsp of the custard mix, then whisk this back into the pan and bring to a simmer, whisking continuously. Pour into a bowl, cover and chill for 1 hr 30 mins. Mix the custard with a spoon to loosen, then lightly whip the cream and fold into the custard.

4 Layer the crêpes on a plate or cake stand using a thin, even layer of custard between each until you've used up the crêpes. Chill for at least 1 hr. *Will keep chilled for 24 hours.*

5 If making the sauce, coarsely grate the chocolate into a bowl. Warm the cream in a small pan over a medium heat until steaming. Remove from the heat, add the chocolate, golden syrup and a pinch of sea salt, and whisk until smooth.

6 For the topping, beat the cream, vanilla and sugar together in a large bowl or using a stand mixer until it reaches soft peaks.

7 Remove the cake from the fridge and pile the cream on top. Top with the chocolate sauce, caramel sauce, nuts and broken biscuits. *Will keep covered and chilled for three days.*

PER SERVING 780 kcals • fat 57g • saturates 31g • carbs 55g • sugars 38g • fibre 3g • protein 11g • salt 0.6g

Celebrating
Nowruz
20 March

Morassa polow ba morgh (Bejewelled saffron chicken pilau)

Morassa polow ba morgh (Bejewelled saffron chicken pilau)

This is a hybrid of two Persian dishes traditionally served at weddings and celebrations – the classic way we prepare chicken as an accompaniment for rice, but also morassa polow which literally translates to 'bejewelled rice'. The 'jewels' are the colourful pistachios, barberries and almonds in the rice. ***Sabrina Ghayour***

SERVES 6 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 2 hrs **EASY**

1g saffron
2 tbsp olive oil
3 large onions, thinly sliced
600g boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 3-4 pieces
6 large garlic cloves, bashed
500g basmati rice
3-4 tbsp Greek-style yogurt
3 tbsp vegetable oil
75g butter
75g barberries
100g pistachios, roughly chopped
75g flaked almonds
3 tbsp caster sugar

1 Boil the kettle and grind the saffron to a powder using a pestle and mortar. Pour 4 tbsp boiling water over the powder, stir and leave to infuse for 5 mins.
2 Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium-high heat and cook the onions for 12-15 mins, until soft and lightly golden at the edges. Add the chicken and garlic, and season well. Stir, keeping an eye on the heat to make sure it doesn't brown, for about 5 mins. This is to maintain the golden yellow colour of the saffron, which is important in Persian food.
3 Pour in just over half the saffron mixture into the chicken, then top up with just enough water from the kettle to cover all the chicken pieces, about 500ml. Simmer gently, uncovered, for 35-40 mins until the chicken is tender.
4 Meanwhile, cook the rice in a large pan of boiling salted water for about 6 mins, or until the grains are elongated and white, but not fully cooked through. Immediately drain in a fine sieve and rinse well under cold running water to remove the starch, using your hands to sift through and make sure every grain is rinsed. Drain well and leave to rest for 10 mins, shaking off any excess water.
5 Remove the chicken and onions to a plate using a slotted spoon, reserving the cooking liquid. Set aside.
6 Pour enough water into a non-stick pan (with a lid) to cover the base by about $^1/_2$cm (do not use a cast-iron pan, as it will conduct too much heat and scorch the rice too quickly). Mix the yogurt with the remaining saffron, the oil and some salt, then pour this into the pan and stir into an even mixture.
7 Halve the rice mixture and scatter (but do not compress) into the pan, ensuring it goes to the edge. Carefully lay the chicken and onions into the pan, then season with a little salt. Add the remaining rice on top. Wrap a cloth around the lid, then use it to tightly cover the pan. If using a gas hob, cook over the lowest heat for about 1 hr. If using induction, cook over a medium-high heat for 45 mins.
8 Meanwhile, melt the butter in a pan, turn off the heat and fold in the barberries, pistachios, almonds and sugar, and set aside.
9 To serve, remove the lid from the pan and gently fold the nut and berry mixture into the rice. Serve most of the rice on a platter, then remove the tahdig (crispy crust), cut into triangles and put on top of the rice. Reheat the chicken broth and serve on the side, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • 1 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 928 kcals • fat 45g • saturates 13g • carbs 92g • sugars 26g • fibre 7g • protein 36g • salt 0.4g

Speedy pancetta, leek & gorgonzola pasta

As a Welsh-Italian, I was brought up in the Welsh Valleys in a "little Italy" community. Italian was my first language, and my nonna and uncle lived next door to us with interconnecting doors that ran between the houses. My mum and nonna were both housewives dedicated to cooking for us. However, my mum created this pasta dish for my dad, with a little Welsh influence. It ended up being one of dad's favourites, so we named it 'pasta del papà'. It combines the salty creaminess of gorgonzola with sweet, caramelised leeks and crunchy pancetta. It's simple to make yet oozes flavour. ***Michela Chiappa***

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY** P

200g long pasta (such as spaghetti)
1 tbsp olive oil
8 slices pancetta or smoked streaky bacon, finely chopped
2 leeks, thinly sliced
1 tbsp butter
1 tsp light brown soft sugar
100g dolce gorgonzola, crumbled

1 Cook the pasta following pack instructions and drain well, reserving a mug of the pasta cooking water. Set aside.
2 While the pasta is cooking, heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium-high heat and fry the pancetta or bacon for 3-5 mins until golden and crispy. Remove to a plate using a slotted spoon and set aside. Add the leeks to the pan, along with the butter and sugar, and fry for 5 mins until softened and slightly caramelised. Add most of the gorgonzola, and stir until slightly melted. Toss in the cooked pasta with a splash of the reserved cooking water along with most of the pancetta.
3 Season to taste and serve with the remaining gorgonzola and pancetta scattered over the top.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 786 kcals • fat 36g • saturates 17g • carbs 80g • sugars 7g • fibre 8g • protein 31g • salt 2.7g

Celebrating
St David's
Day
1 March

family

Celebrate Ramadan

Plan ahead for the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and the breaking of the fast with these sharing recipes from food writer **Soha Darwish**

photographs CHRIS TERRY

Ramadan Kareem everyone! This is the official Ramadan greeting in Egypt and across the Arab world. In Arabic it means 'Ramadan is generous', the generosity here refers to the merits and spiritual gains you take back from this holy month through fasting, praying, charitable activities and social gatherings – it's like a month of endless bonuses.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, which is called 'Hijri year', and it is the most important month. Muslims all around the world observe Ramadan by fasting from food and water from dawn until sunset.

What I want to share with you here is how I remember Ramadan in my childhood years as well as an adult in Egypt. The festivities in Egypt during Ramadan are like no other place. It is known among Muslims and Arabs as one of the top destinations to visit during the holy month. I love how Egypt offers everything from prayers, spiritual rituals and huge tables of free Iftar meals laid in almost every corner of its decorated streets, to the bustling Ramadan Nights in lavish tents serving mouth-watering Suhoor meals with live entertainment that keeps going until before dawn. Everyone wants to experience this wonderful time of year – Christians in Egypt enjoy it just as much.

In Ramadan, the day starts with a body-fuelling meal called 'Suhoor' between midnight and dawn prayer, after which the fasting begins.

There are famous Suhoor staples, and it's all food mindfully selected to set up the body for the long hours of fasting. The most famous is 'foul medames' (fava beans), which has a low glycaemic index, releasing energy slowly, and is also a source of plant protein. Other Suhoor staples are eggs, yogurt, and dates – at Iftar, the second and main meal of the day at sunset, dates are often eaten first to break the fast, an Islamic tradition after prophet Mohamed.

Just before sunset, friends and relatives start gathering at homes, while the hype in the kitchen gets a bit intense in the final countdown to Iftar. Food has to be ready and served exactly on the dot at Maghrib (sunset) prayer time, not a minute before or after. I have to say, as a host, it can feel like a military operation, especially with the loud cannon fire sound (another Ramadan tradition) declaring the end of fasting; precision is not taken lightly in Ramadan. But let me tell you that there is nothing more rewarding than that first sip of water or a thirst-quenching drink, the euphoria is just indescribable.

After Iftar the festivities begin with Taraweeh prayers, a special prayer only during Ramadan, then unforgettable suhoor outings in Arabian Nights-themed tents, which I got to experience from my adolescent years onwards.

As a child, my parents would opt to stay home watching entertaining TV programmes and TV series specially produced for Ramadan. You can't keep up with all the star-studded shows competing to capture their audience's attention throughout the whole month.

An average Iftar table in a family home is usually a buzzing long table of soup, a few appetisers and a couple of mains. The vibes around the table with all the Ramadan decorations and lanterns are just ecstatic. I love a celebratory meal with friends and family in any religious or social occasion, except in Ramadan, we get to do this for 30 days continuously!

Here, I'm sharing five dishes that are popular among families during Ramadan in Egypt.

Soha Darwish grew up in Alexandria with Syrian heritage and is a London-based food writer, culinary consultant and food blogger. Her cooking style is defined by easy, hassle-free recipes with big flavours inspired by the Middle East. *@sohadarwish_food*

Aubergine fattah

Aubergine fattah

Fatteh or fattah is an all-time Middle Eastern favourite: it is truly addictive, fun to make and easily takes the centre of the table. I love the fact that it does not need special culinary skills nor any finesse to perfect – it's a layered dish of crispy fried bread, meat or vegetables, yogurt sauce and a colourful garnish. This is my family recipe for aubergine fattah which I genuinely believe is the best version for this beloved dish.

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 30 mins plus soaking **COOK** 25 mins **EASY**

1.5kg aubergines (around 8), cut into 4cm cubes
500ml vegetable oil, for frying
3 large Lebanese pittas, cut into 4cm squares
2 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
500g beef mince
1 tsp Arabic mixed spice or baharat
2 tsp pomegranate molasses

For the yogurt

500g plain yogurt
2 tbsp tahini
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tsp pomegranate molasses
½ lemon, juiced

To serve

1 tbsp olive oil
50g pine nuts, toasted
2 garlic cloves, crushed
½ tsp sumac
50g pomegranate seeds
large handful of parsley, finely chopped

1 Tip the aubergine into a bowl and cover with 3 tsp salt. Pour over cold water and set aside to soak for 2 hrs. Drain thoroughly and tip out onto a clean tea towel to dry well. This helps the aubergine absorb less oil when frying and makes them less greasy. If short on time you can skip this step.

2 Pour the vegetable oil into a large saucepan ensuring it is no more than a third full and put over a medium heat. Heat until it reaches 170C on a cooking thermometer or a cube of bread dropped in browns in 30 seconds. Cook the pitta, in batches, for 30 seconds to 1 min until golden and crispy. Remove using a slotted spoon to a plate lined with kitchen paper. Keep the oil over the heat and next add the aubergine in batches. Fry for 6-8 mins until golden and soft.

3 Heat the olive oil in a large, deep frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 10 mins until the edges are golden. Stir in the beef, breaking it up with a wooden spoon, along with the mixed spice and the pomegranate molasses. Increase the heat to medium-high and brown the meat all over until cooked through, around 10 mins. Meanwhile, mix the yogurt with the tahini, garlic and pomegranate molasses and season to taste with the lemon juice and some salt and pepper.

4 To serve, heat the olive oil over medium heat and stir in the pine nuts and garlic. Fry for 3-4 mins, until golden and aromatic. Arrange the fried pitta on a serving platter with the aubergine, sprinkle over the meat, then the yogurt and scatter over the fried pine nut mixture, sumac, pomegranate seeds and parsley. Serve immediately.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (8) 432 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 6g • carbs 28g • sugars 12g • fibre 7g • protein 20g • salt 0.92g

Shorbet lesan asfour (orzo pasta soup)

Soup is a must on any Iftar table, which makes a lot of sense. It is a gentle start to eating again after long hours of fasting. I chose the most nostalgic and easiest soup to make as it takes just a few minutes. There are a few variations for shorbet lesan asfour, which translates in Arabic as bird's tongue soup. It can be alarming if you don't know that 'lesan asfour' is what we call orzo pasta, as it has the shape of a bird's tongue.Traditionally we use chicken broth, and sometimes we add small meatballs, or you can have it with a vegetable broth instead and meat-free.

SERVES 8 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 10 mins **EASY**

1 tbsp ghee or butter
180g orzo
1 mastic crystal (optional – available online or in Middle Eastern or Mediterranean shops)
2 litres good-quality chicken stock
2 cardamom pods
2 bay leaves

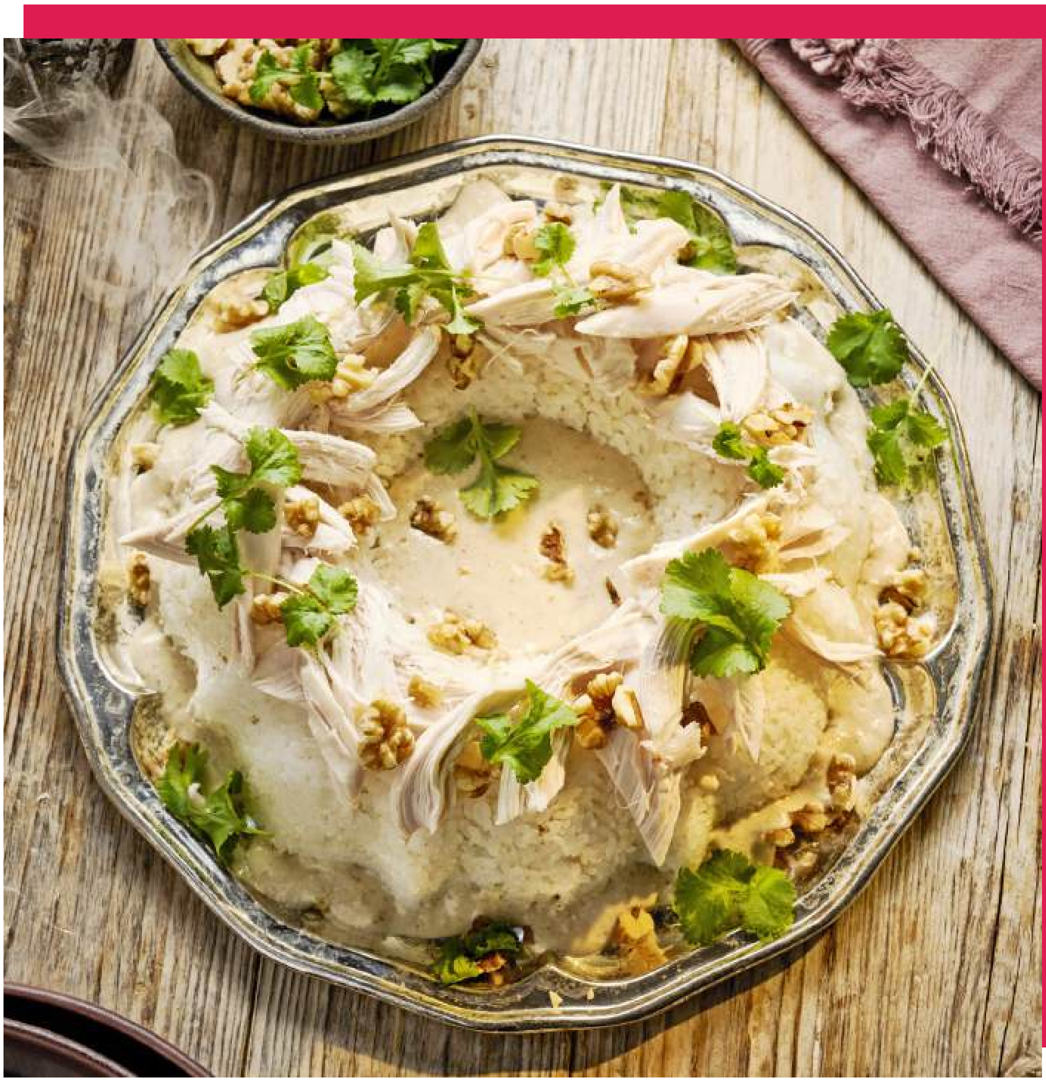
1 Heat the ghee in a medium saucepan over a medium heat. Add the orzo and stir to coat in the ghee, then stir in the mastic crystal, if using. Toast for 2-3 mins, stirring regularly, until the orzo is golden.

2 Pour in the chicken stock, then add the cardamom pods and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Simmer for 6-8 mins until the orzo is just tender. Remove the cardamom pods and bay leaves, then season to taste. Serve hot.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat • low cal
PER SERVING 131 kcals • fat 3g • saturates 1g • carbs 17g • sugars 0.5g • fibre 2g • protein 9g • salt 1.4g

Sharkasiya

Sharkasiya is derived from the word Sharkas, which refers to the Circassian people, an ethnic group who lived in Turkey during the Ottoman Empire. It's another example of the Egyptian cuisine's diversity and how it incorporated staples from various parts of the world. Decades ago, sharkasiya was typically cooked in the kitchens of Egyptian families with Turkish ties or ancestors. Sharkasiya is a rich walnut bread sauce topped with chicken cutlets and served with white rice. There's something very soothing about this mellow nutty dish, that is now an opulent favourite across upper-middle-class households in Egypt regardless of their roots.



SERVES 6 **PREP** 25 mins
COOK 1 hr 20 mins **EASY**

1 whole chicken (around 1.2kg)
1 large onion, roughly chopped
1 carrot, roughly chopped
1 celery stick, roughly chopped
6 black peppercorns
2 bay leaves
500g white short-grain rice
neutral oil, for the tin
small handful of coriander, chopped, or whole leaves
25g walnuts, roughly chopped

For the sauce

2 tbsp ghee or butter
6 garlic cloves, half crushed, half roughly chopped
2 tsp ground coriander
3 slices white bread, crusts removed and roughly torn (around 140g)
150g walnuts
125ml whole milk

1 Put the chicken in a large, deep saucepan and cover with cold water until completely submerged. Add the onion, carrot, celery, peppercorns and bay leaves, and slowly bring to a boil over a gentle heat. Cook at a gentle simmer, skimming off any scum that rises to the top, for 45-60 mins until the chicken is cooked through. Carefully remove the chicken and set aside until cool enough to handle, then strain and reserve the stock. Put the stock back on the heat and reduce for 20-25 mins over a high heat until you have around 750ml-1 litre.

2 Meanwhile, tip the rice into a large saucepan and wash, agitating the grains around in the pan with your hands and carefully drain off the water. Repeat this several times, until the water turns from milky to almost clear. Add cold water until it reaches 1cm above the rice, and salt well. Bring to a boil over a high heat, then once boiling, cover with a tight-fitting lid and reduce the heat to its lowest setting. Let it cook for 15 mins, then switch off the heat and leave covered for at least 20 mins.

3 To make the sauce, heat the ghee in a pan over a medium heat. Once melted, stir in the crushed garlic and ground coriander and cook for 2-3 mins until fragrant. Set aside to cool slightly. Put the bread, walnuts and roughly chopped garlic in a food processor and blitz until finely chopped. Pour in the milk, 400ml of the reserved stock and add the fried garlic. Blitz again until smooth, adding a splash more stock if needed – you want a thick consistency. Return the mixture to the garlic pan and let it cook for 3-4 mins, adding a splash more stock if needed. Season well with salt and pepper.

4 Oil a 2.5 litre (27cm) bundt tin. Remove the bones from the chicken and tear the meat into large chunks. Season well. Pack the hot rice into the bundt tin and invert onto a lipped serving platter. Pour most of the sauce into the middle and around the rice, then top the rice with the chicken. Scatter over the coriander leaves and chopped walnuts to serve. Serve any extra sauce on the side.

PER SERVING 876 kcals • fat 46g • saturates 11g • carbs 65g • sugars 2g • fibre 4g • protein 49g • salt 0.79g

Cheese sambousek

Halfway through the soup course we start eyeing the food laid in front of us and we usually seek a bite-sized appetiser to nibble on while finishing the soup. On most occasions it will be fried filo pastry triangles called 'sambousek', that have a filling of either cheese or meat. My favourite is a white cheese similar to feta with nigella seeds. The combination is just magical and so easy to master. Usually, sambousek is prepared ahead of Ramadan and frozen in batches (which is very convenient for busy home cooks) then fried minutes before Iftar.

MAKES 24 **PREP** 25 mins
COOK 15 mins **EASY** V

200g feta, crumbled or Kashkawan stretchy cheese, grated
2 tbsp nigella seeds
1 tbsp plain flour, plus extra for dusting
300-400g sambousek or filo pastry sheets, cut into 8-10cm wide strips
500ml vegetable oil, for frying

1 Mix together the cheese and nigella seeds in a bowl until combined. Tip the flour into a second bowl and gradually whisk in 250ml water, then set aside.

2 Lightly dust a clean work surface with flour and lay out one pastry strip. Add 1 tsp of the cheese mixture close to the top corner, then start folding into a triangle until you reach the lower end of the strip.

3 Brush the end of the pastry strip with the flour and water mixture and seal the triangle. Transfer to a baking tray lined with baking parchment and repeat with the remaining strips and mixture.

4 Pour the oil into a large saucepan, filling it no more than halfway. Heat until the oil reaches 180C on a cooking thermometer or a cube of bread browns in 30 seconds, then cook in batches of 6-8 for 1-2 mins on each side until golden all over. Transfer to a wire rack lined with kitchen paper and serve warm.

PER SAMBOUSEK 81 kcals • fat 4g • saturates 1g • carbs 8g • sugars 0.4g • fibre 0.5g • protein 3g • salt 0.32g

Kunafah

Kunafa or Knafeh is the most famous Ramadan dessert across the Arab world and the Middle East; sweet, rich, crunchy, and creamy inside – with numerous traditional variations. It was originally served in Ramadan during the Umayyad Caliphate when Muawiya – the Caliph – ordered his cook to prepare a rich dish to help him endure the fasting. Kunafah is a thin noodle-like dough, and is packed in loops and sold chilled or frozen in supermarkets. I have always found the process of making fresh kunafah in traditional Arabic souqs hypnotising. I vividly remember the kanafani – the person who makes kunafah – towering over a circular hot stove with a shower-head-like tool in his hand seeping with runny dough, skilfully drawing continuous spirals that are transformed instantly to hair-like noodles. Kunafah is usually finely chopped and laid in a tray with a filling of either cheese, clotted cream or toasted nuts with raisins. It's then baked until golden crunchy and drenched with sugar syrup.

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 40 mins plus cooling **COOK** 1 hr 40 mins **EASY V**

400g frozen kunafah
250g pure butter ghee, melted and cooled slightly, plus extra for the tin
50g pistachios, crushed (optional)

For the filling
6 tbsp cornflour
3 tbsp caster sugar
500ml whole milk
1 tsp vanilla extract
350g clotted cream or thick double cream
100g ricotta

For the syrup
250g caster sugar
½ lemon, juiced
½ tsp vanilla extract

1 To make the filling, whisk together the cornflour and sugar in a saucepan, then gradually whisk in the milk. Add the vanilla and clotted cream, then set over a low-medium heat. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook, stirring regularly, for 6-8 mins or until it thickens to the texture of a thick crème pâtissière. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool, whisking occasionally to prevent lumps forming. Spread onto a plate and set aside to cool fully.

2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Line a large baking tray with baking parchment. Using a rolling pin, bash the frozen kunafah, still in its pack, until broken up into powdery pieces. Tip into a bowl and pour over the ghee, then toss together using your hands. Divide the mixture into two, tipping half onto a baking tray and patting out into a 24cm circle using your hands, ensuring there are no gaps. Using a spatula, scrape the cooled filling out on top of the kunafah, then scatter over the ricotta. Carefully cover with the remaining half of the kunafah mixture, trying not to leave any gaps. Bake for 30 mins until golden and crispy all over.

3 Meanwhile, to make the sugar syrup tip the sugar, lemon juice, vanilla and 250ml water into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Cook for 5-7 mins until the sugar has dissolved and has thickened slightly, then set aside to cool to room temperature.

4 Remove the kunafah from the oven and leave to cool for 15 mins, then invert onto a serving dish. Pour over the cooled syrup to serve and garnish with the pistachios, if using.

PER SERVING (8) 972 kcals • fat 66g • saturates 38g • carbs 87g • sugars 44g • fibre 1g • protein 8g • salt 0.63g

Soha's tips

Frozen kunafah is also called 'quataifi' in some Middle Eastern shops; 'kadayif' or 'kataifi' in Mediterranean shops.

For a more traditional take, swap out the thick double cream for 2 x 125ml packs of Puck thick cream and reduce the cornflour to 3 tbsp.

Shoot director JORDAN EDMONDS MOORE | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH | Stylist FAYE WEARS

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Super sesame

Tahini and sesame seeds lend a mellow nutty flavour to this simple bake

recipe HELENA BUSIAKIEWICZ
photograph CHRIS TERRY

Tahini & sesame loaf cake

This is a great way to use up any leftover tahini you might have knocking around in the back of the fridge.

SERVES 8-10 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 1 hr **EASY** V

- 150g salted butter, plus 1 tbsp, softened and extra for the tin
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 220g golden caster sugar
- 75g tahini, well stirred
- 85g soured cream, at room temperature
- 2 eggs, beaten, at room temperature
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste
- 225g plain flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- splash of milk (optional)
- 1 tbsp honey (optional)

1 Butter and line a 2lb loaf tin with baking parchment. Use a pastry brush to spread the bottom of the lined tin with the 1 tbsp butter, then shake in 1 tbsp sesame seeds to coat the base. Set aside. Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5.

2 Put the rest of the butter, the sugar and tahini in a large bowl. Beat using an electric whisk, until combined and fluffy, about 4-5 mins.

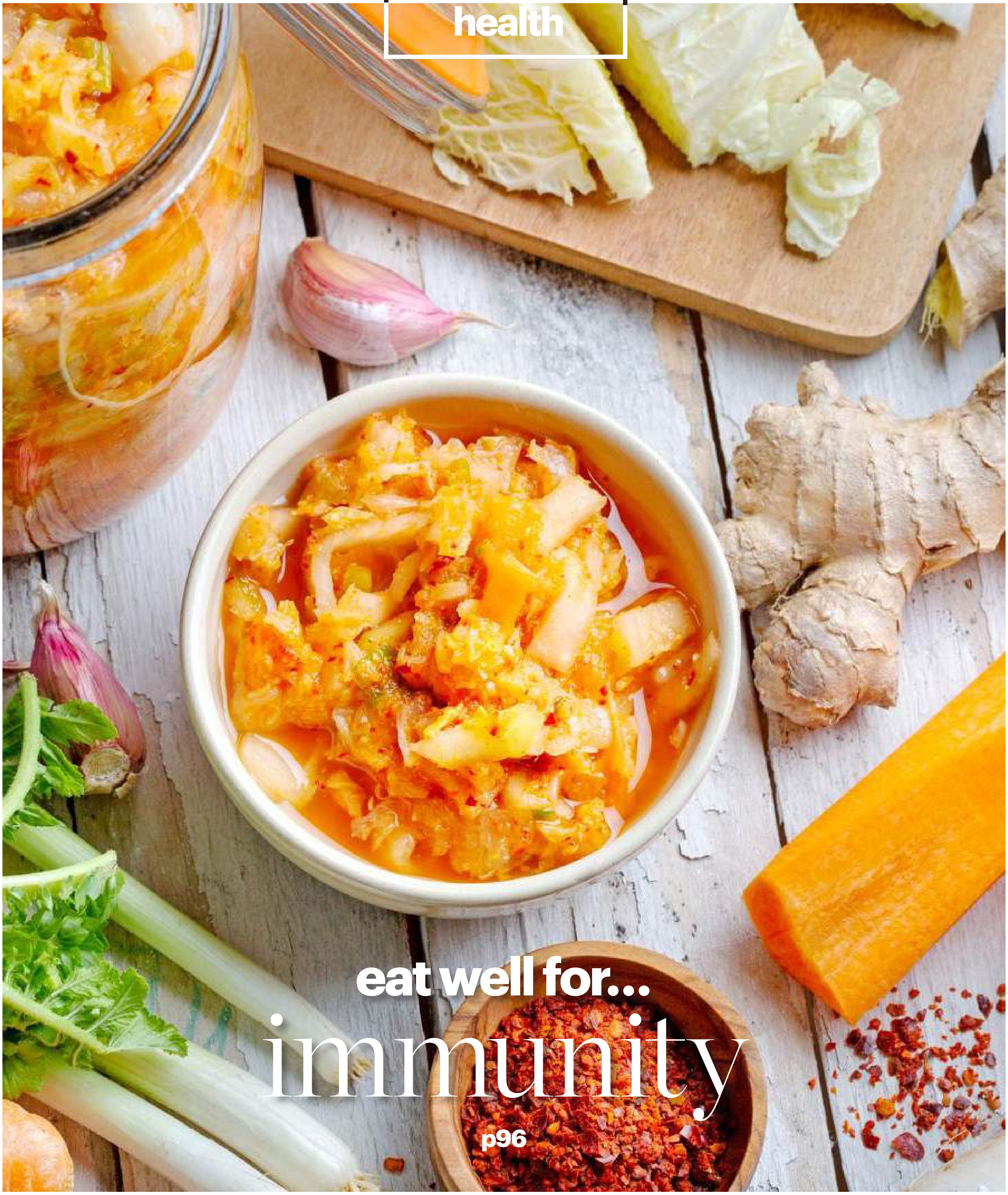
3 Whisk in the soured cream, eggs, oil and vanilla. The mix may split, but don't worry. Sift over the plain flour and raising agents, then fold to combine. Add a splash of milk if the mixture seems very thick.

4 Pour the mixture into the prepared tin, then sprinkle the remaining 1 tbsp sesame seeds on top. Bake for 55 mins-1 hr or until golden, risen and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean.

5 Leave to cool in the tin for 10 mins, then remove to a wire rack to cool completely. Brush with the honey (melted in the microwave if needed) for a shiny finish, if you like.

PER SERVING (10) 405 kcals • fat 24g • saturates 11g • carbs 40g • sugars 23g • fibre 2g • protein 6g • salt 0.55g

Shoot director FREDDIE STEWART | Food stylist JESSICA MCINTOSH
Stylist FAYE WEARS



eat well for... immunity

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also in this section

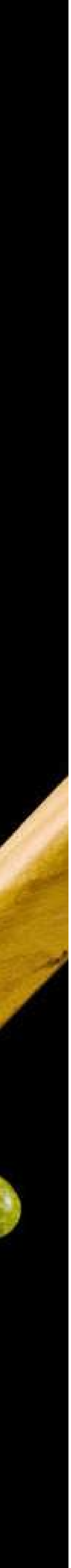
planet-friendlier:
power up with pulses **p90**

planet-friendlier

Power up with pulses

GOOD FOR YOU AND THE PLANET

Mallika Basu is a food writer, commentator and author of two cookbooks *Miss Masala: Real Indian Cooking for Busy Living* and *Masala: Indian Cooking for Modern Living*. She writes an award-nominated newsletter called *In Good Taste* on food, people and planet, and has a sustainable food qualification from University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership.



Why you should get over your 'beans hesitancy' to improve your diet, navigate the cost-of-living crisis and fight climate change

words MALLIKA BASU

Dried beans, peas, and lentils don't always grab the spotlight, but they're true superstars for our health, the planet and our wallets.

They're so important for the environment and sustainable diets that the United Nations decreed 10 February World Pulses Day to celebrate them. The UN defines pulses as the dried edible seeds of leguminous plants (legumes) grown primarily for human consumption such as lentils, beans and dried peas. This excludes fresh vegetables like green peas and beans, crops cultivated for oil extraction (e.g. soybean and groundnuts) or for agricultural use (such as clover and alfalfa). Confusingly, the terms pulses and beans can often be used interchangeably.

These little seeds pack a mighty punch. They're a rich source of the plant-based protein we need to consume to reduce our reliance on meat. Pulses have the potential to contribute to carbon sequestration, where carbon dioxide is taken out of the air and trapped in soil. They improve the quality and fertility of soil by taking nitrogen from the air and fixing it into the ground. This is of immense environmental benefit reducing the current dependence of global farming systems on synthetic nitrogen fertilisers that are reliant on fossil fuels. These cause grave damage to the environment and nature, depleting soil over time.

Not only that, but pulses are also hardy crops that are self-fertilising and drought-resistant with long storecupboard life. They use water efficiently to grow – lentils need less than one tenth of water per kilogram than beef by the UN's estimations. Planted alongside other crops (intercropped), pulses maximise the nutrients in soil and increase biodiversity, the wealth of living organisms on and around farmland. They play a key role in agroecology, farming in tune with nature, and regenerative agriculture, designed to return soil and nature to its best health.

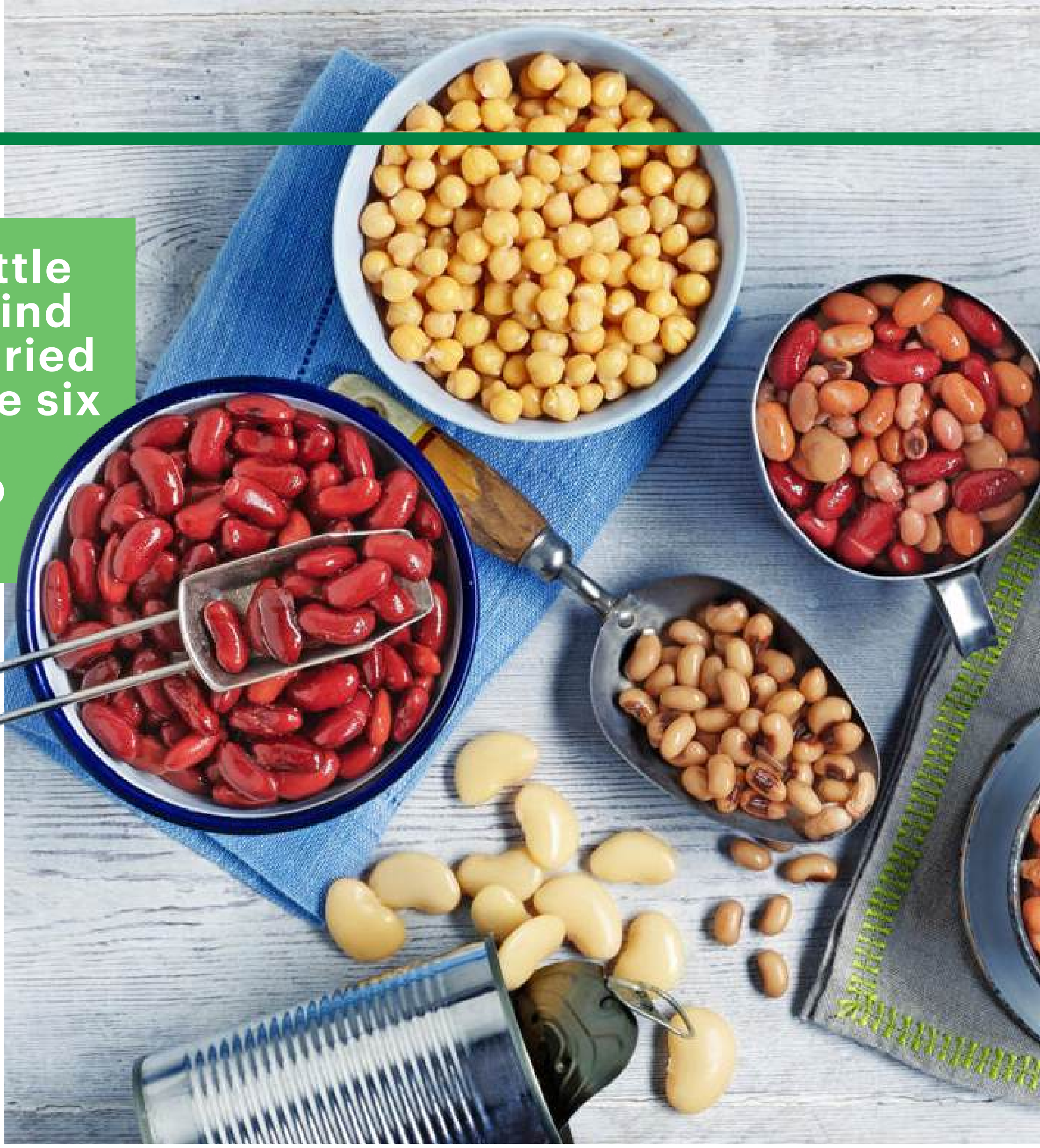
A force of nature for the planet, pulses are also powerhouses of nutrition and cost-effective to buy and cook. Many people around the world magic them into vibrant dishes for everyday and celebratory meals. From rice and peas across the Caribbean, the soup, broths and wraps of Latin America, to the dips and salads of the Middle East and the curried, sautéed and fermented dishes in south Asia, they form the mainstay of food culture, cultural foods and global cuisines.

> “People around the world magic them into vibrant dishes. From rice and peas in the Caribbean, to the dips and salads of the Middle East”

As nations became more industrialised, urbanised and wealthier, pulses historically fall out of fashion, replaced with more aspirational, expensive items like meat and fish. UK-grown varieties like fava beans, the dried version of broad beans, while perfectly delicious and nutritious for people, are exported to the Middle East for livestock feed. Bean hesitancy has set in, with people wary of their well-known digestive after-effects and not knowing how to cook and enjoy them. They can be difficult to digest because of the plant compounds lectins and oligosaccharides. Lectins are proteins that target sugars in the body, and high-lectin foods can cause gas, bloating, and cramping, while oligosaccharides are the fibre and complex carbohydrates in them.

The Eat-Lancet Commission's guideline for a planetary health diet advises we consume 50g of dried beans, lentils and peas per day. A global movement called Beans is How is also reminding people of the magic in beans and other pulses, and sugest we double how much of it we consume by 2028. Over 100 chefs, organisations and brands, schools and more, across 50 countries, have joined forces to put the magic of beans back on the menu. "Beans are not just for vegetarians – they're a great choice for anyone looking for a nutritious and sustainable food option that is kind to bodies, the planet, and our wallets," said Ali Morpeth, public health nutritionist and bean champion. ►

If you need a little convincing to find fresh love for dried pulses, here are six things to know that might help persuade you:



1 Nutrition powerhouses

Pulses are a rich source of proteins (21-25%), complex carbohydrates (60-65%), dietary fibre (10-20%) and micronutrients such as folate, thiamine, riboflavin, vitamin B6, niacin, iron, zinc, magnesium and potassium, according to Julie A Lovegrove, professor of nutrition at University of Reading in her paper titled 'The benefits and challenges associated with raising our daily pulses'. They are low in fat and have a low glycaemic index, which means they don't cause blood sugar levels to spike. They naturally contain all the essential amino acids for a complete protein, and combining them with grains can further enhance their goodness, says Morpeth. The soluble variety of dietary fibre found in pulses can aid digestive and bowel health, help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease.

2 Gut health heroes

While they can be the butt of gassy jokes, beans are excellent for gut health. That gassiness and flatulence you feel is, in fact, your gut bacteria enjoying a feast in your stomach. Gas is the by-product of gut bacteria breaking down the oligosaccharides in beans and pulses. For those who experience discomfort, experts recommend introducing pulses slowly into the diet so the system can adjust. Soaking pulses, with a few changes of water, also helps. As a rule, the longer a dried bean is likely to take to cook, the more it would benefit from a soak. Ironically, the more we eat beans the higher the chances of more investment into plant breeding programmes to develop varieties that are comfortable to stomach.

> “When cooked, pulses are arguably the fastest of fast foods. A quick toss in heady flavours and they're a nutritious and quick meal”

3 Mental health champs

When gut bacteria are happily fed, they produce the right neurotransmitters for better mental health, too. Dr Radzman is leading a campaign called Broad n Mind to raise awareness of the role of broad beans in mental health. They are rich in levodopa (or L-DOPA), a compound that helps increase dopamine or the brain's "feel-good" chemical. She also highlighted that fermented beans like tempeh and doubanjiang (Chinese spicy fermented beans) are a great source of GABA, a relaxing neurotransmitter that can help with anxiety. Each type of bean comes with its own nutrition profile, so the best way to optimise their health benefits is to eat a variety of them.

4 Versatile, fast food

On their own, pulses may not seem the most exciting of ingredients, but paired with the right herbs, seasoning and spices they are sponges for flavour. They can

Photographs ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

also be used in many forms. Fava bean flour and gram flour, made of huskless little brown chickpeas, make excellent gluten-free bakes and pancakes, for instance. Lovegrove is spearheading a campaign called "Raising the Pulse", which incorporates pulses into staple foods like bread to increase their use. When cooked, pulses are arguably the fastest of fast foods. A quick toss in heady flavours and they're a nutritious and quick meal. There is little difference between the convenience offered by cans, packets and jars, except the ones in the latter can be seasoned and softer in texture. Dried beans offer the added flexibility of adjusting texture and taste.

5 Affordable, available and low-waste

Cooking pulses from scratch has the added benefit of being enormously cost-effective and handy, given their long shelf life. While it may seem like a chore to soak the beans overnight and then cook them, slow cookers and pressure cookers make it a breeze. A cook's tip from Ghanaian food writer Patti Sloley is to soak a cup of pulses with a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda, rinse and then cook with fresh water to speed things up. Once cooked, you can portion and freeze pulses. They are also readily available online, in supermarkets and corner shops. Look out for locally grown varieties to support local enterprise, soil and food security and revive historic favourites. Hodmedod's has been driving the movement in the UK bringing back varieties like carlin peas, which date back to medieval monks and had a lengthy hiatus from our grocery shelves.

6 The world at your fingertips

If school dinners and bland lentil suppers have left you underwhelmed with pulses, there is a whole world of inspiration from people who know how to season and serve them. The UK and Ireland's beloved baked beans, for instance, originated in Native American tribes. The recipes from cuisines around the world that centre beans in the diet are likely to use generations of traditional, indigenous and scientific knowledge to make them palatable and digestible. Mexico's Epazote herb, East Asia's kombu sea kelp and ginger, fennel, carom seeds and asafoetida in South Asia are all used to dispel gas and discomfort when cooking beans. They may well remove any lingering resistance you may feel towards pulses and beans, too.

Do you have 'bean hesitancy'?

If digestive woes hold you back from bean love, you are not alone. Bean hesitancy describes the reluctance of some people to eat beans, which becomes "bean resistance" in more severe cases. Some reasons for this include:

Misconceptions

Misconceptions and misinformation abound about how to prepare and eat beans, which affect perceptions and understanding.

Difficulty cooking

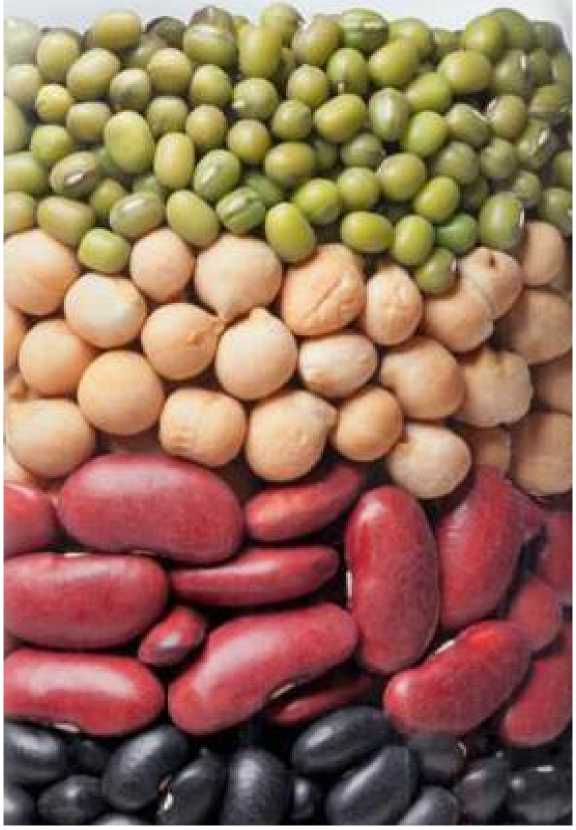
Some people think beans are difficult or time-consuming to cook, especially when cooked from the dried versions.

Intolerance

Some varieties of legumes can cause digestive discomfort and pain, and in some cases, allergic reactions like itching and hives.

Hard-to-cook phenomenon

Some legumes are resistant to softening during cooking after lengthy storage, rendering them hard and unpalatable.



Turn over for recipes using pulses ▶

Try our recipes

Khichdi

Enjoy a classic Indian dhal known for its Ayurvedic properties, from food writer Rinku Dutt.

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 25 mins
COOK 45 mins **MORE EFFORT V**

- 1½ tbsp cumin seeds
- 250g moong dhal
- 250g medium or short grain rice (basmati is also fine)
- 1½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 medium-sized tomato, cut into 1cm cubes
- 150g frozen peas
- ½ tsp asafoetida
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2½ tbsp ghee
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 dried red chilli
- 3 cardamom pods, seeds removed and crushed, husks discarded
- 1 tbsp grated ginger

1 Toast 1 tbsp of the cumin seeds in a small frying pan over a medium heat until the aromas are released. Leave to cool, then put in a coffee or spice grinder and grind to a fine powder. This will make about 4 tsp ground cumin, of which ½ tsp will be used at the end of the dish. *The remainder will keep in an airtight container for up to a week for use in another dish.*

2 Dry-toast the moong dhal in a frying pan over a medium heat for about 5 mins. Keep tossing the pan so the dhal does not burn. Take off the heat and leave to cool.

3 Gently wash the rice under cold water two to three times to remove the starch. Add the dry-roasted moong dhal to the rice and wash once again. Put both in a large ovenproof pan and fill with enough water to come 1½ inches above the rice mixture. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat. Spoon off any scum that forms on top of the water and discard it.

4 Stir in the ground turmeric and tomato, return to a simmer, then pour in 500ml water. Return to a rolling simmer, reduce the heat and simmer for a further 20 mins with the lid on. Check the dhal and rice are cooked – they should have merged together to form a porridge-like consistency. Add more water if necessary and simmer for longer. Once cooked, keep on a low heat and add the frozen peas, asafoetida, 1 tsp salt and the sugar. Stir well and keep on a gentle simmer.

5 Meanwhile, put a small frying pan over a medium heat. Add 2 tbsp of the ghee, the remaining cumin seeds, bay leaf, dried chilli and crushed cardamom seeds, and allow the aromas to release, taking care not to burn the spices, around 2-3 mins. Add the ginger and cook for 2 mins on a medium heat, stirring constantly so it doesn't stick. Stir the ginger and cumin mixture into the khichdi and simmer for a final 2 mins before removing from the heat. Spoon the last ½ tbsp ghee over the top and sprinkle with ½ tsp of the toasted and ground cumin seeds from step 1 (also known as bhaja moshla). Close the lid until ready to serve. Just before serving, stir well one more time. Serve with poppadoms or flatbreads and pickles or mango chutney and hardboiled eggs, if you like.

PER SERVING 263 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 3g • carbs 39g • sugars 3g • fibre 4g • protein 11g • salt 0.6g

Simple coconut & bean soup

Levi Roots shares a recipe that shows how something delicious can be made from mostly storecupboard ingredients.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V** ❄

1 tbsp sunflower oil
½ bunch of spring onions, whites and greens separated and sliced
1 red pepper, diced
1 scotch bonnet chilli, deseeded and pounded to a paste
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 tsp dried thyme
1 tsp medium curry powder
1 tsp allspice
3 plum tomatoes, chopped
1 vegetable stock cube
410g can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
410g can pinto beans, rinsed and drained
410g can black-eyed beans, rinsed and drained
2 x 400g cans coconut milk
2 limes, juiced

1 Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Sizzle the spring onion whites, pepper, chilli paste and garlic for 5-8 mins until soft and fragrant. Add the thyme, curry powder and allspice, then cook for 1 min more. Stir in the tomatoes, then cook for 2 mins.
2 Crumble in the stock cube, then tip in all the beans and the coconut milk. Simmer for 10 mins. Turn off the heat and stir in most of the spring onion greens, the lime juice and some seasoning. Ladle into bowls and scatter with the remaining spring onions just before serving.

PER SERVING 581 kcals • fat 38g • saturates 28g • carbs 45g • sugars 14g • fibre 11g • protein 19g • salt 3.19g

Ful medames

Try this brilliant Egyptian dish from Mitshel Ibrahim, the head chef of London restaurant Ombra. Made using fava beans, it's mashed into a chunky purée along with garlic, lemon and tahini.

SERVES 2 as main or 4 as side
PREP 5 mins **COOK** 35 mins **EASY** **V**

400g can fava beans (available online) or broad beans
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
100ml olive oil
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp chilli flakes
2 large, ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped (or 200g can of chopped tomatoes, if tomatoes aren't in season)
½ lemon, juiced
2 tbsp tahini

1 Drain the beans and rinse. Fill the empty, clean can with water and pour into a saucepan with the beans. Bring them to the boil to warm through, then take them off the heat.
2 Meanwhile, in a separate medium frying pan, gently fry the onion and garlic in all but a few tablespoons of the olive oil for 5 mins, then add 2 tsp sea salt flakes, the cumin, chilli flakes and tomatoes. Drain the beans, reserving some of the cooking liquid. Add to the onion mixture and cook over a low heat for 30 mins, stirring often and adding some of the cooking liquid if it looks dry.
3 Using a potato masher, mash the beans with the remaining olive oil, lemon juice and tahini. The final consistency should be a chunky, soft purée. If it splits slightly, mix in a drop of cold water.

PER SERVING (4) 335 kcals • fat 30g • saturates 4g • carbs 8g • sugars 2g • fibre 4g • protein 6g • salt 3.1g

eat well for…

immunity

Dr Chintal Patel explains how choosing foods for their beneficial effect on your digestion can support your immune system

Chintal is a long-serving GP for the NHS as well as a food content creator, cookbook author and our regular contributor. She has a passion for nutrition and lifestyle medicine, and aims to help people approach cooking and eating in a way that supports overall well-being. *@drchintalskitchen*

The immune system is a complex network throughout your body that not only defends against infections like bacteria and viruses but also regulates inflammation, repairs cells and performs many other essential functions. Although no single food or diet can 'boost' immunity on its own, what you put on your plate can significantly impact your immune health. The body requires a range of nutrients to keep the immune system functioning optimally. Fortunately, a balanced, varied diet, as outlined below, provides most of these nutrients.

One key exception is vitamin D, actually a hormone that our bodies produce through sunlight exposure, which plays an important role in immune function. In the UK, from October to March, sunlight levels aren't sufficient to produce adequate vitamin D, so a daily 10mcg supplement is recommended. If you don't spend much time outdoors or cover up your skin, consider taking this supplement year-round.

Dietary requirements

A strong immune system requires a variety of nutrients. Vitamins A, B6, B12, C and D, as well as copper, folate, iron, selenium and zinc, all play essential roles in supporting immune function. Given that much of your immune system is housed in your gut, maintaining a healthy and diverse gut microbiome is crucial for optimal immunity. Here are a few tips to this end:

- **Feed your gut:** Include more prebiotic-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, legumes, beans, whole grains and fermented foods (e.g. kimchi, sauerkraut, kefir). These support the growth of beneficial bacteria that are key to immune function.
- **Eat the rainbow:** The more colourful fruits and vegetables you eat, the more antioxidants, vitamins and minerals you provide your body, which helps protect against oxidative stress, reduce inflammation and support immune cell function.
- **Nuts & seeds:** These are excellent sources of zinc and selenium, important for maintaining a robust immune system.
- **Good quality fats:** Omega-3 fatty acids found in oily fish (like mackerel, trout and salmon) as well as plant-based sources like flaxseeds, chia seeds and walnuts help reduce inflammation and support immune function.
- **Herbs & spices:** Add herbs like garlic, ginger and turmeric to your meals. These are rich in anti-inflammatory compounds and phytonutrients, such as curcumin in turmeric that helps modulate immune responses.

By including a variety of these foods in your diet, you can help ensure your immune system remains active and strong.

Photographs GETTY IMAGES

Foods to limit

Reduce ultra processed foods (UPFs)

Studies show that diets high in UPFs can weaken immunity due to a lack of essential nutrients. They are also low in fibre, which can negatively affect the gut-immune connection. Wherever possible, try to cook from scratch using minimally processed foods most of the time.

Reduce sugar

High-sugar foods can suppress immune function by promoting inflammation and affecting white blood cell activity, weakening the body's ability to fight infections. Try a simple switch like swapping sugary drinks for water or herbal teas.

What else can I do?

- **Get vaccinated:** Check with your doctor to ensure you're up to date on all recommended vaccines. Vaccines train your body to produce antibodies that protect against specific diseases, making them one of the most effective ways to prevent infections.
- **Go for a walk:** A brisk 20-minute walk outside each day boosts blood flow, stimulates your lymphatic system and helps mobilise immune cells. A walk in nature can also reduce stress, a known factor in immune suppression.
- **Sleep well:** Our immune system works hard and restores itself during sleep, so getting quality rest is essential for immune health. Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night to help your body recharge and maintain a strong immune defence system.

Immune-supporting miso chicken noodle soup

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 55 mins **EASY**

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large red onion, thinly sliced
- 320g celery, sliced into 2cm pieces
- 320g shiitake mushrooms, roughly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed and left for 10 mins
- 2½cm piece of ginger, minced
- 500g chicken legs, skin and fat removed
- 320g carrots, roughly chopped
- 2-3 tbsp miso paste
- 100g wholewheat noodles
- 250g broccoli, roughly chopped
- 4 spring onions, sliced, to serve (optional)
- red chilli, sliced, to serve (optional)

1 Heat the oil in a large, heavy pan over medium heat. Add the onion and celery, and cook for 5 mins until beginning to soften. Add the mushrooms and cook for 3 mins until softened. Stir in the garlic, ginger and chicken, and cook for a few minutes until the chicken is browned.

2 Add the carrots, miso, some salt and pepper, and 1.5 litres water to the pan. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 20-30 mins, until the chicken is fully cooked.

3 Remove the chicken from the soup, discard the bones and shred the meat. Add the broccoli and noodles, and cook for 4-5 mins until the noodles are soft. Serve right away, topped with sliced spring onions and red chilli, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • fibre • vit c • 4 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING 426 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 3g • carbs 35g • sugars 14g • fibre 12g • protein 32g • salt 1.21g

4 of your 5-a-day
with a rainbow of colours

Miso
Miso is a fermented food and a good source of probiotics, which support gut microbiome health

10+ plant points

High in fibre
Especially prebiotic fibre which helps feed your gut microbiome

Carrots
Carrots are rich in beta-carotene, which the body converts to vitamin A. Vitamin A is essential for maintaining the integrity of the skin and mucosal barriers, the body's first line of defence against pathogens

Mushrooms
When exposed to sunlight or UV light, these produce vitamin D, which enhances immune function by supporting white blood cell activity and reducing inflammation

Ginger
Offers anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, helping reduce inflammation and fight infections

Broccoli
Contains a phytochemical, sulforaphane, which has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties

Garlic
Provides prebiotic fibre and contains allicin and other sulphur compounds with antimicrobial, antiviral and anti-inflammatory properties. To maximise the effect, crush garlic and let it stand for 10 minutes before using

Photograph MAJA SMEND | Shoot director JORDAN EDMONDS-MOORE
Food stylist JACK SARGESON | Stylist WEI TANG

Gourmet lifestyle

The Ultimate Burger Showdown p100 | The Suite Life p106 | Competitions p111

Inside The Ultimate Burger Showdown

Presenting A Cut Above Burgers at The Ninth Cut — an electrifying showdown in the quest to discover the best dream burger

After weeks of anticipation and mouth-watering submissions, the A Cut Above Burgers competition reached its sizzling finale on 23rd February at The Ninth Cut, Novotel Al Barsha, Dubai. From innovative flavour combinations to bold ingredient choices, burger enthusiasts went head-to-head, crafting their dream creations in a battle for the top spot.

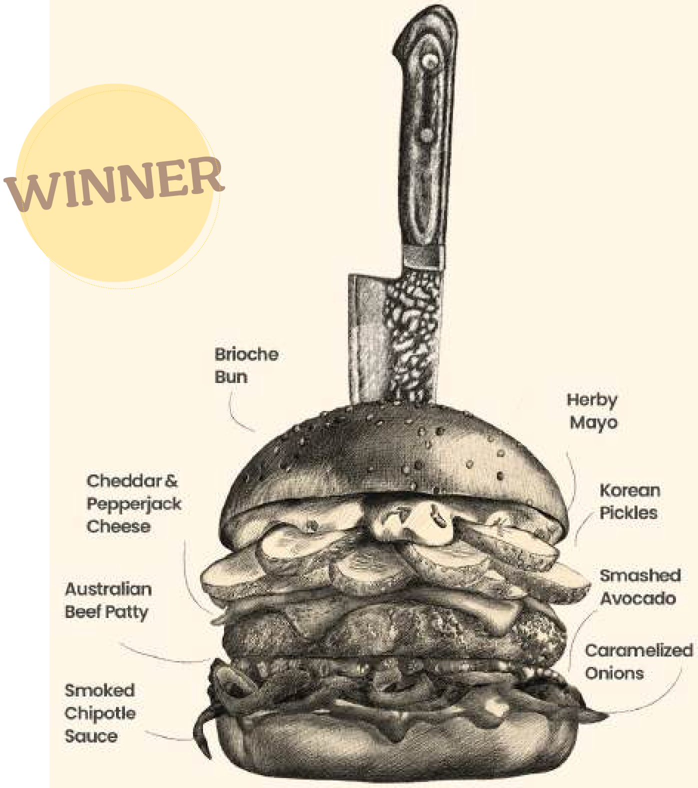
The competition kicked off with burger lovers submitting their ultimate recipes, rallying votes, and climbing the leaderboard. The top three contenders earned a coveted spot in the grand finale, where they brought their ideas to life with the help of The Ninth Cut's expert culinary team.

Guided by an esteemed judging panel, the event showcased creativity, craftsmanship, and an undeniable love for burgers. After a thrilling taste test, the judges crowned the ultimate winner: The Garibas Burger will now take its well-deserved place on The Ninth Cut's menu, with its creator taking home a spectacular gift hamper worth AED1,500.

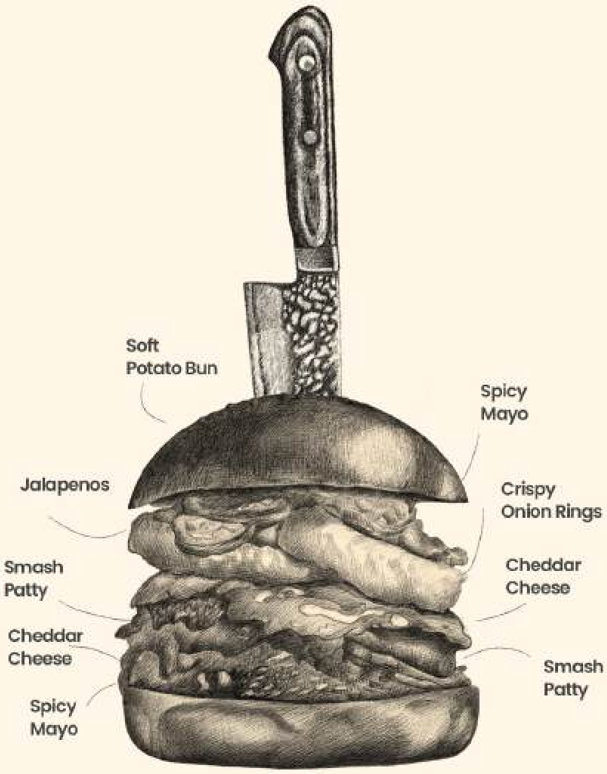
The Garibas burger is made with a blend of three prime cuts—brisket, ribeye, and chuck roll—enhanced with rich Wagyu fat for depth of flavour. It is topped with a herby mayonnaise infused with beef tallow, rosemary, and French thyme, alongside a smoky chipotle sauce. Korean-style pickles, marinated in sesame oil, rice vinegar, and chilli flakes, add a tangy kick, while creamy avocado spread and caramelised onions complete the ensemble.

Swipe through the next pages to relive the excitement—look at all the fun we had!

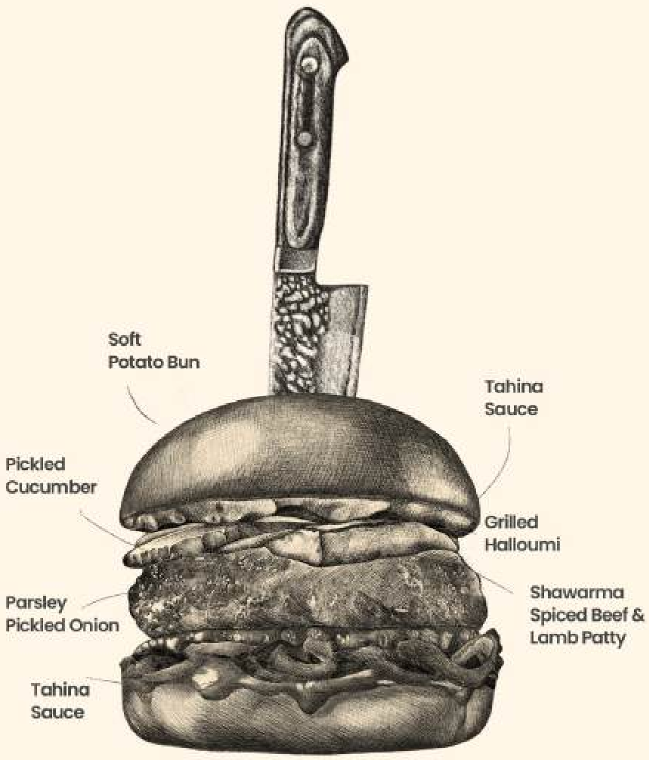
Niaz Al Badri


WINNER
Brioche Bun
Herby Mayo
Cheddar & Pepperjack Cheese
Korean Pickles
Smashed Avocado
Australian Beef Patty
Caramelized Onions
Smoked Chipotle Sauce

Jennifer D'mello


Soft Potato Bun
Spicy Mayo
Jalapenos
Crispy Onion Rings
Smash Patty
Cheddar Cheese
Cheddar Cheese
Smash Patty
Spicy Mayo

Tala Nabulsi


Soft Potato Bun
Tahina Sauce
Pickled Cucumber
Grilled Halloumi
Shawarma Spiced Beef & Lamb Patty
Parsley Pickled Onion
Tahina Sauce

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The Ninth Cut brand creation and illustrations are by the Brande team, with illustrations and art direction by Marta Andreas and creative direction by Kevin Tatios.
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THE CUT

THE CUT

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The Suite Life

Delano Dubai, the highly anticipated debut of the iconic brand in the city, offers a memorable fusion of luxury and leisure

The long-awaited debut of the Delano brand in Dubai has made a splash as profound as its game-changing arrival in Miami in 1995, which redefined luxury hospitality. Renowned for pioneering the boutique hotel concept on Miami Beach, Delano epitomizes refined sophistication, artful minimalism, and effortless allure. Situated near its sister property, Banyan Tree Dubai (formerly Caesars Palace), the hotel invites curiosity, concealed behind a wall of lush greenery. Upon stepping inside, the design narrative unfolds—sleek pathways weave through the space, exuding luxury with a light, welcoming ambience.

The sanctuary

Floor-to-ceiling windows frame captivating views of the resort pool and Arabian Gulf, ensuring the vibrancy of Dubai's coastline remains a constant companion. Interiors are dressed in soft, neutral tones complemented by textured fabrics and sleek, contemporary furnishings. A beloved signature of the brand, the fresh green apple offers a delightful welcome—perfectly enjoyed on the private balcony with an espresso in hand as the Gulf breeze drifts in.

The marble bathroom elevates the sense of calm with its soothing palette, complete with indulgent Byredo bath amenities that add an aromatic touch to daily rituals. Thoughtful in-room features ensure every comfort is met: a Bose sound system invites guests to set the mood with their favourite playlists, while a state-of-the-art coffee machine, Dyson hairdryer, and plush robes paired with cushy slippers cater to every indulgence. A much-appreciated turn-down service reveals a box of Deep Sleep gummies, enriched with magnesium and wellness-focused ingredients. This subtle, thoughtful gesture highlights the brand's dedication to guest wellbeing.

What's on the menu?

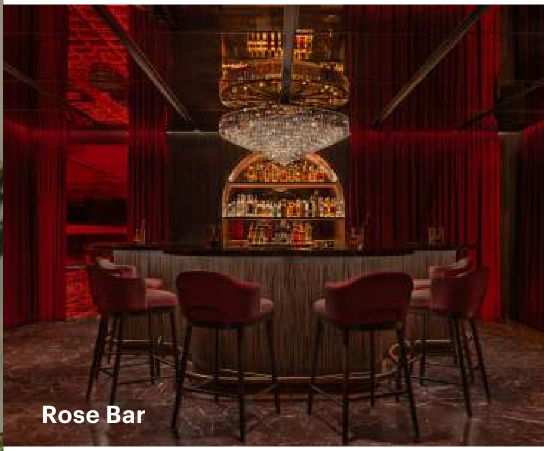
Set against the dazzling backdrop of Ain Dubai, the pool evokes a retro vibe with striped yellow and white umbrellas and towels. The elegance of a Roman bath comes to life, with openings on all sides of the pool inviting a seamless flow of space. Drawing inspiration from fairytales, a charming table for two sits at the front, while a sand pathway leads to the pool on the other end—creating an idyllic spot to relax and unwind, aside from your room and the beach. After laps in the pool, satisfy your hunger pangs with a perfectly composed poolside lunch: crisp calamari, crunchy sweet potato fries, and a poke bowl teeming with tuna, mango, avocado, and all the familiar poke accompaniments. For younger guests, the children's menu offers a tempting selection, with chicken tenders reigning as the top choice.

The newly opened Blue Door by homegrown Rikas Group brings the bold, vibrant flavours of Anatolia to the table, where the serenity of white-on-white walls is elevated by stunning blue floral murals. Indoors, the open kitchen offers a captivating view of the chefs at work, while outdoors, sheer curtains float gently, adding a whimsical touch to the space. A grand piano enhances the garden terrace, an idyllic setting for al fresco dining. The menu is a refined tribute to Anatolia's rich culinary heritage, featuring a selection of mezze and expertly grilled dishes. Begin with the Atom (charcoal-grilled eggplant blended with garlic yoghurt and sautéed dried chilli peppers), Stuffed vine leaves filled with rice, caramelised onions, pine nuts, and a tangy burst of sour cherry and the Kozde Ahtapot;

Blue Door

SPORTS CLUB

Tutto Passa



Rose Bar

a beautifully grilled octopus resting on a bed of grilled potato, garlic, and sundried tomatoes. A standout mezze is the Levrek Marin, a citrus-cured sea bass served with dill-infused olive oil. For mains, the Kaburga is the true showstopper: slow-cooked beef rib atop creamy freekeh bulgur rice, drenched in a rich beef jus. Pair it with grilled asparagus drizzled in za'atar chimichurri for a perfect side. And don't miss the Katmer for dessert—layers of homemade phyllo pastry filled with pistachios, paired with stretchy, creamy Maras ice cream – a spectacular finish to the meal.

La Cantine Beach, another gem from the Rikas Group, is a stylish beach club nestled within the Banyan Tree Dubai, seamlessly merging wellness and recreation in an effortlessly chic setting. The space is brimming with seaside energy, from the baby blue pickleball court and volleyball net to the wooden workout deck stacked with equipment. Two swimming pools, framed by plush blue-and-white loungers and gently swaying palm trees, set the tone. One of the pools is an exclusive adults-only retreat beside the French-Mediterranean restaurant. A quirky touch comes in the form of a car converted into an ice cream and sweets cart, adding a playful charm to the setting. The drinks menu features a range of signature cocktails alongside poolside classics, while the food offering is a balanced mix of restaurant meals and casual bites. Highlights include Prawns in a robust garlic, chilli and tomato sauce—make sure to order bread to soak up the irresistible sauce—alongside creamy Salmon tartare with spicy mayo and avocado, crowned with a crisp rice hat. For a heartier bite, try the Roast beef baguette with Truffle and parmesan fries. The Coconut milk panna cotta with citrus and honey is a refreshing, tropical finale to a perfect beachside meal.

The resort's all-day dining destination, Tutto Passa, offers a refined à la carte menu featuring a range of enticing options. Start with the made-to-order Menemen, a vibrant mix of scrambled eggs, tomatoes, onions, and peppers, or indulge in freshly made pancakes, waffles, and French toast. The buffet spreads an impressive array of offerings, from antipasti and exquisite cruffins and pastries that stand apart from the usual fare. You can also find chia pudding, yoghurt and muesli pots, fresh fruit, smoked fish, and a selection of delicatessen meats, ensuring a varied and satisfying start to the day.

Additional features

Delano Dubai's Tropicool Kids' club is the ultimate playground for young guests, featuring a variety of activities designed to keep them entertained. From an outdoor play area and trampoline to snooker tables, arcade games, and a dedicated kids' pool, there's plenty for children to enjoy. Guests of Delano Dubai can enjoy full access to the exceptional Banyan Tree Spa, located within the larger resort, offering a world-class wellness experience.

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Room rates from AED1,900. Visit delanohotels.com/dubai for more information.

Competitions

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to gourmet goodies, up for grabs

WIN A TWO-MONTH SUPPLY OF BOOCH, WORTH AED1,000

At Booch, we love your guts! Enjoy a two-month supply of our delicious, small-batch Kombucha brewed right here in Dubai. Packed with probiotics and antioxidants, Booch promotes overall wellbeing from within. Made with locally sourced produce, our range of flavours, including the new Pineapple Chili, Apple Cinnamon, and Mandarin Turmeric, are as tasty as they are good for you. Whether you're sipping on hibiscus, raspberry ginger, or strawberry mint, our kombucha will make your taste buds and tummy happy in equal measures.

WIN A BRUNCH ALLA ITALIANA FOR TWO AT IL MOTTO RESTAURANT, WORTH AED 995

Enjoy the ultimate Italian brunch experience at Il Motto Restaurant, located in JA Ocean View Hotel, JBR. 5 lucky winners can enjoy a delightful Brunch Alla Italiana for two (soft package). Indulge in an exquisite three-course Italian menu, complemented by limitless beverages, live entertainment, and a vibrant atmosphere every Saturday.

WIN A BRUNCH FOR TWO AT SIDDHARTA LOUNGE BY BUDDHA-BAR, WORTH AED900

Indulge in an unforgettable evening at Siddharta Lounge by Buddha-Bar, where you and a guest can enjoy a three-course sharing-style evening brunch, inclusive of premium beverages (excluding champagne), with stunning views of the Dubai Marina and Dubai Harbour skyline. Every Friday, delight in exquisite bites such as Tuna Tartare, Creamy Burrata, and Shrimp Tempura, followed by mains including Braised Wagyu Short Ribs, Soya Glazed Salmon, and Spicy Aubergine, alongside Hand Cut Truffle Fries. To round off your feast, enjoy the signature 'Siddharta Desserts Platter.'

WIN SUPPERCLUB MIDDLE EAST MEMBERSHIP AND YUM CHA BRUNCH AT ZHENG HE'S, JUMEIRAH MINA A'SALAM FOR TWO, WORTH OVER AED800

Enjoy unlimited discounts for unlimited guests at five-star venues across the UAE with a SupperClub Middle East Diamond Membership, valid for 12 months. You'll also win Yum Cha Brunch at Zheng He's, Jumeirah Mina A'Salam for two, worth AED550. With the SupperClub membership, exclusive discounts are automatically included on your bill, covering fine dining, brunches, pool days, spa treatments, and more, with bookings made easy through your SCME concierge service.

WIN A MOROCCAN-INSPIRED IFTAR FOR TWO AT TAGINE, WORTH AED760

Step into the heart of Morocco this Ramadan with an enchanting Iftar for two at Tagine, a hidden gem at One&Only Royal Mirage. Delight in an authentic culinary journey featuring slow-cooked tagines, aromatic harira soup, freshly baked Moroccan bread, and sweet delicacies. Immerse in the magic of Ramadan, surrounded by intricate lanterns and soothing Andalusian melodies, while savouring the rich flavours of North Africa. Enter now for a chance to win!

WIN AN IFTAR FOR TWO AT ARABIAN COURTYARD, WORTH AED700

Celebrate the spirit of Ramadan in a stunning alfresco setting at Arabian Courtyard, where authentic Levantine flavours take centre stage. Indulge in a traditional Iftar for two, featuring a selection of mezze, succulent grilled meats, slow-cooked lamb ouzi, and decadent Arabic sweets, all prepared by expert chefs. With the soothing ambiance of live oud music and the warm glow of lanterns, immerse in an unforgettable evening of heritage.

WIN A DINING EXPERIENCE FOR TWO AT VERO ITALIANO, WORTH AED500

Experience an authentic taste of Italy at Vero Italiano, Rixos Marina Abu Dhabi, with a chance to win a dining experience for two worth AED 500, including premium beverages! Indulge in a selection of delectable Italian dishes, from fresh Burrata and Beef Carpaccio to homemade Maltagliati pasta, Angus Ribs, and Wild Sea Bass. Finish off with a classic Tiramisu, all complemented by a selection of premium beverages.

WIN A JOE & THE JUICE COMBO MEAL EXPERIENCE, WORTH AED560

Treat yourself to Joe & The Juice, where you can indulge in a selection of ten combo meals, each featuring a delicious sandwich paired with your choice of a refreshing juice or shake. Perfect for enjoying over multiple visits or sharing with friends, this prize brings the ultimate Joe & The Juice experience to you.

WIN AN IFTAR FOR THREE AT SHAMIANA, WORTH OVER AED500

Experience a culinary journey this Ramadan at Shamiana, where heritage-inspired flavours take centre stage. Enjoy an Iftar buffet featuring slow-cooked meats, biryanis, hand-crafted mezze, live cooking stations, and traditional Ramadan sweets. Complemented by freshly prepared juices and Arabic coffee, it's a great way to break your fast.

WIN A DINNER FOR TWO AT LÚNICO, WORTH AED500

Enter Lúnico and treat yourself to an unforgettable dining experience. Nestled along the stunning shores of J1 Beach, Lúnico offers a blend of Spanish fine dining and celestial charm. Win a romantic dinner for two, where you'll savour an exquisite menu crafted with passion and sophistication. From tantalising starters to decadent desserts, indulge in a culinary journey unlike any other.

To be in with a chance of winning these prizes, visit our competitions page on *bbcgoodfoodme.com*, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to directly to the website.

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group and entrants below 21 years old are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

W DUBAI
THE PALM

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Savor an exceptional selection of International and Arabic dishes at LIV, the all-day dining restaurant. With its spacious and vibrant ambiance, LIV offers a memorable Iftar experience throughout Ramadan.

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